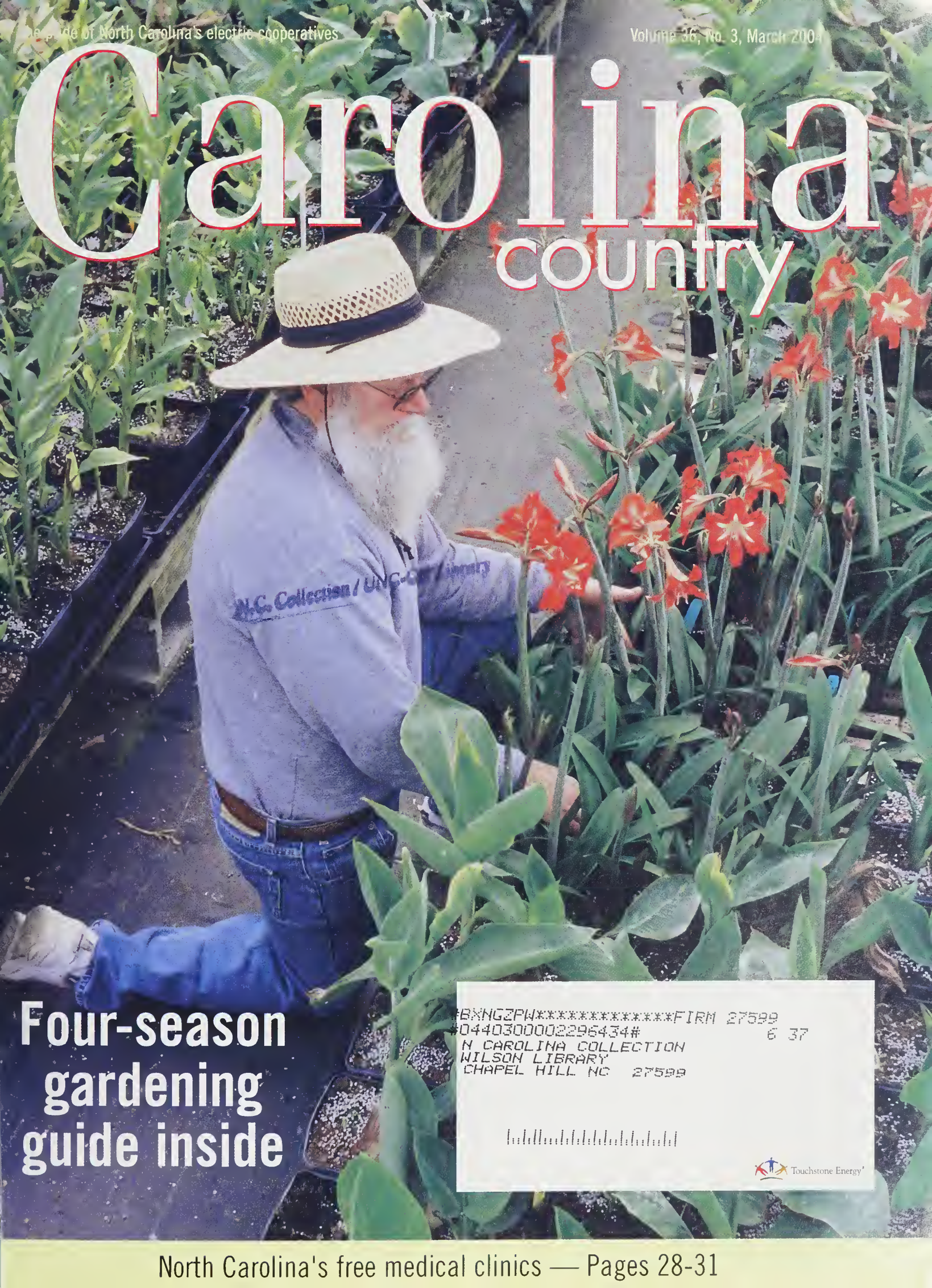
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 36, No. 3, March 2004

Carolina country



Four-season gardening guide inside

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North Carolina's free medical clinics — Pages 28-31

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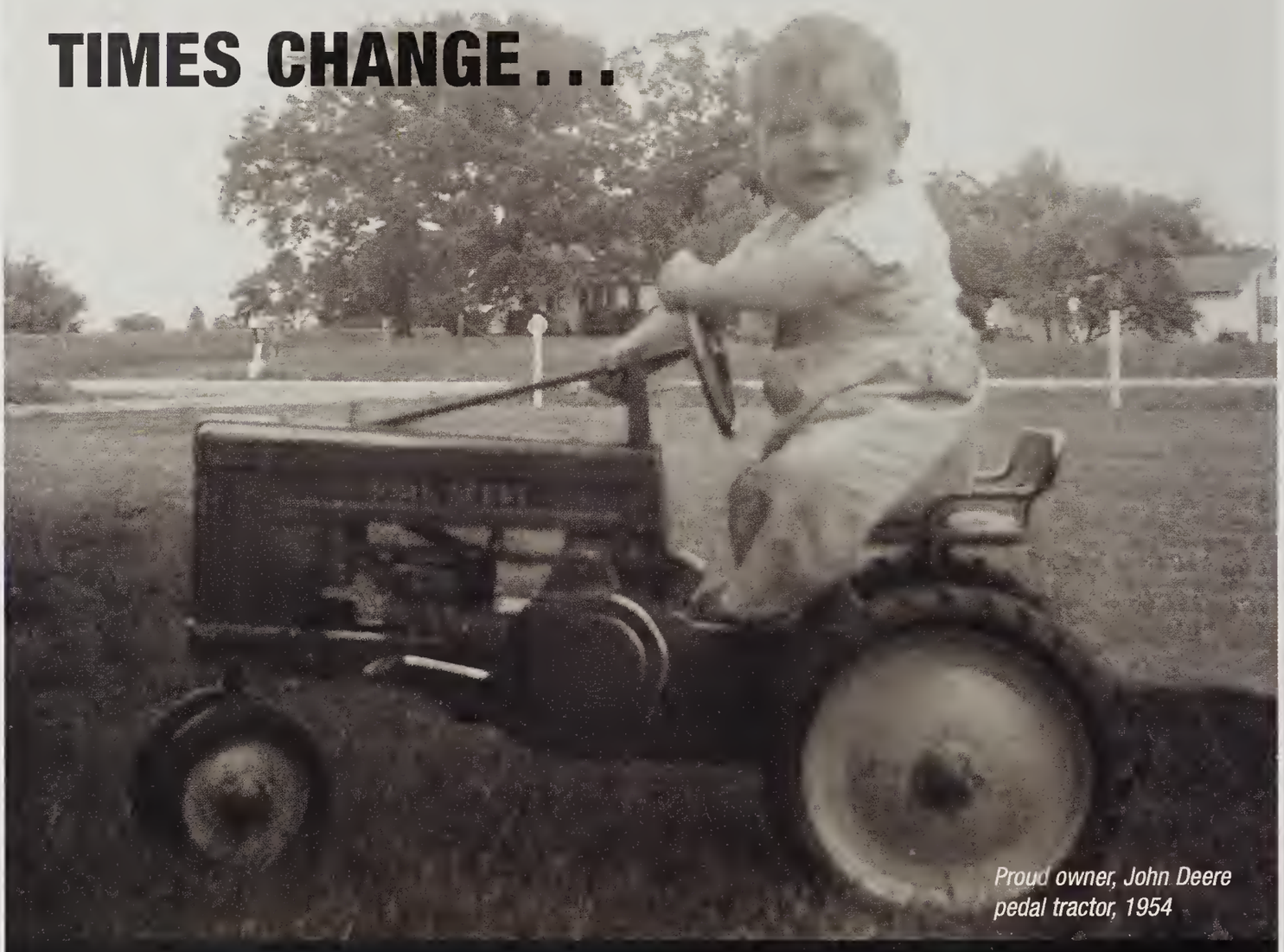

Proud owner, John Deere pedal tractor, 1954

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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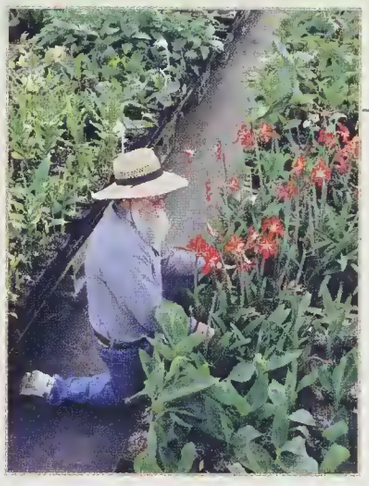

On the Cover
Edward Serwan Jr. helps out at the Plant Delights Nursery in Juniper Level, Wake County. The nursery's goal is "to change the way America gardens by offering the best, the newest, and the strangest, in fun, garden-worthy perennials." Visit www.plantdelights.com (Photo by Salstrand Studios, Raleigh)

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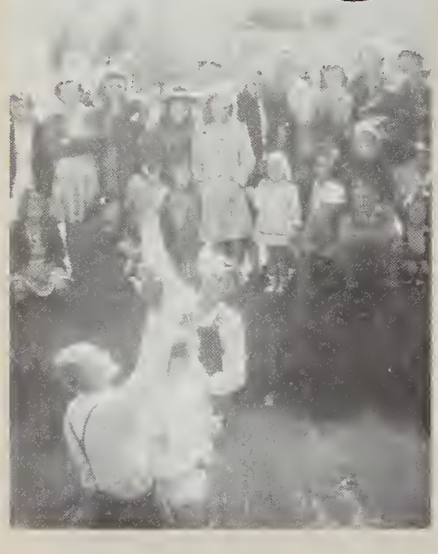

After we had prepared to publish "My view of the Mountain View Church," by Ellen Brooks of Alleghany County [February 2004], Ms. Brooks came up with some photographs of the baptizing that used to take place there at the "baptizing hole." The photos show her Uncle Mack, who was pastor at the time, doing the baptizing. It took place on a creek located down a path from the church. Here is how Ms. Brooks described it:

"Baptizing was always held on a Sunday morning. The entire congregation would attend. All family members, friends and neighbors were welcome to attend, regardless of where they went to church. Uncle Mack would have the 'baptizing hole' in the creek behind his house all dammed up and ready for the occasion. We would all gather there on the banks of the clear mountain creek.

"Whoever was to be baptized would wear white. If they didn't own a white dress or pants and shirt, someone in the congregation would lend it. People back then didn't own an outfit of every color as we do today. Usually they had no extra money to spend on a one-time need. So people shared whatever they had.

"The congregation would sing hymns and the preacher would give a short sermon. A lot of the time, they baptized in pairs: sisters, female friends, married couples. A preacher would stand on each side of the person or persons being put under the water. It was always a beautiful, meaningful ceremony. Then we would all go back to the church for regular services. At the end of the service, the entire church body would give the 'right hand of fellowship' to those who had joined the church by baptism. They were now a member of the church with full rights and privileges."

Historic Occoneechee Speedway Trail

Readers have asked for contact information to reach the old Orange Speedway, now the Historic Occoneechee Speedway Trail [January 2004 magazine]. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this is the only remaining race track (one-mile oval dirt) from NASCAR's inaugural year. The hiking trail is three miles long. It's open daily all year long. The address is 320 Elizabeth Brady Rd., Hillsborough, NC. Phone: (919) 732-6886.

Love from Lake Gaston

I just wanted to let you guys know how very much we enjoy your magazine. We are a part of the Halifax Electric Membership Corporation.

We have a house on Lake Gaston. We have been getting your magazine for years. Every time I get your magazine out of the mailbox, I look right in the back left side for your Carolina Kitchen recipes. I have to admit this is the first time that I checked out your Web site. I love it as well.

I loved the article about Abe Lincoln this month [February 2004]. It would be interesting to find out just where he was born. The garden portion is always very informative.

We love looking at the events going on around our area, and sometimes not in our area. We went to the beach just last year to check out the N. C. Maritime Museum that was listed. It was great.

Thank you for such a great magazine. It is great to hear how good you are sometimes.

Linda Dale
Lake Gaston
Halifax EMC

Old-timey pecan log

I am looking for the recipe for an old-timey pecan log. I have searched high and low, but have seen only the modern versions with the fondant-like filling. They just aren't the same. If anyone can help, I would greatly appreciate it.

Lisa Hicks
375 Della Wilson Rd.
Lexington, NC 27295
E-mail to: eyates@lexcominc.net

Have dog, will deliver

On the night of New Year's Day 2004, my little miniature pinscher died. It certainly devastated me and left me heartbroken. In the eight years I had her she was such a joy in my life.

I called my sister, Pam, who lives in Florida, for moral support. Being a dog lover herself, she called every ad that was selling Min-Pins. Everyone she called had already sold their dogs.

So Pam then called her vet, Dr. Chatham, whose assistant, Tammy, gave Pam the name and number of a breeder in Orlando. Pam called the number, and she and the lady talked for awhile. Ms. Thornton listened as my sister explained the loss of my little dog.

Ms. Thornton said she has six mature Min-Pins and wasn't breeding right now because she's planning on moving. Pam asked Ms. Thornton where was she planning on moving to and Ms. Thornton replied, "North Carolina." Pam told her I live in North Carolina.

To Pam's and my surprise, Ms. Thornton said that she would give me one of her dogs and even bring it to me! In the meantime, she could also look for land and a home while she was here.

Seven days after my little dog died, Ms. Thornton, who neither my sister nor I had met, drove 568 miles in one day and brought me a precious little Miniature Pinscher.

With the help from my sister, who wouldn't give up, and a wonderful stranger from afar, I now have a new bundle of joy, who has certainly helped to heal my broken heart. This goes to show that there are still good people out there. So if you get a new neighbor in North Carolina and her name is Ms. Thornton, you will certainly have a good neighbor and friend.

Sabrina Barr
Council

Slaves and ex-slaves

I thoroughly enjoyed the article about the Roanoke Island Freedmen's Colony [February 2004], but there are two items that need comment.

1. "Once Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared all slaves freed in January 1863 . . ." This is not true. The Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves in the areas not under Union control. It was strictly a war measure designed to prevent Britain and France from recognizing the Confederacy and hopefully cause a slave rebellion.

2. "Richard Etheridge . . . had seen battle and later joined the famous Buffalo Soldiers." Unfortunately, the Buffalo Soldiers were only as famous as their white counterparts. Both were instrumental in the virtual annihilation of our native people.

Brock Townsend
Tarboro

Ramblin' Rose

I have been involved in racing since 1950. I never ran the Orange Speedway. At 75 years old, I still drive a 1938 Ford Coupe in the Old Timers Racing Club.

Ernest "Rosey" George
Kernersville
EnergyUnited

Cabin Correction

Information about these Gerald Yokely photos in February's magazine ["Carolina Cabins"] was reversed by mistake. The top photo shows a cabin that Greg and Tina Smith built behind their Surry County home in the late 1990s. The bottom one shows the cabin that Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. Adkins moved into their backyard in Stokes County in 1990. It had originally been built by Mrs. Adkins' great-grandfather in 1893.

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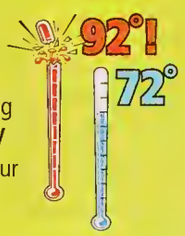

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South River and Merrimon communities thank Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

B. Tosto

When Hurricane Isabel hit our small community of South River in Carteret County, many homes were damaged and some destroyed. In a one-mile stretch, 80 homes received damage and approximately 57 had water inside the homes. We were very fortunate and quite surprised that power was restored within 27 hours of the hurricane. We appreciate the efforts of the Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative and the contractors who worked to restore our very important electrical service.

Within a couple of weeks, Craig Conrad, general manager of Carteret-Craven Electric, contacted me. Carteret-Craven Electric wished to donate $500 to our community, and he wanted to know who should get the check. By this time, the Salvation Army was no longer providing meals, and the generous members of the Merrimon community had taken over and started serving lunch and supper each day. I recommended that the $500 be given to the Merrimon Methodist Church to help with the expenses of providing these meals.

Mr. Conrad and Mr. Pate met me at the South River-Merrimon Fire and EMS. That morning, the water pump at the fire station had quit, and I was trying to get someone to work on it. Mr. Conrad and Mr. Pate worked on the pump, but it became apparent that parts were needed. South River is 25 miles from the nearest hardware shop.

We presented the check to members of the Merrimon Methodist Church, and Mr. Conrad and Mr. Pate returned to Morehead. Mr. Pate by that time was late for a meeting he needed to attend.

Meanwhile, Craig Conrad purchased the necessary parts for the water pump and returned to the South River-Merrimon Fire and EMS and worked on the pump. He was not dressed for this kind of work (he was wearing a starched, white shirt) but that didn't stop him. He got wet and dirty, but he worked on our water pump without hesitation. This was definitely beyond the call of duty.

We are lucky in Carteret County to have the electrical service and employees we have with Carteret-Craven. The communities of South River and Merrimon appreciate the efforts of our Carteret-Craven cooperative, and I personally thank Mr. Conrad for his help.

Juanita T. Gaskill
South River

B. Tosto

Hurricane Isabel caused extensive flooding in Carteret County's Down East communities. These photos (above and top right) show South River.

Mr. Conrad and his next door neighbor and friend, Preston Pate, came down one morning to present the check. Pres is the director of the Division of Marine Fisheries and was my supervisor for the last seven years that I worked with Marine Fisheries before retiring. He is a great friend.

Late January ice caused power outages

More than 19,500 households and businesses served by electric cooperatives in North Carolina lost power during an ice storm Jan. 25-27. Most severely hit were Pender, Columbus and Bladen counties, served by Four County EMC and Brunswick EMC.

Linemen reported the conditions to be the most severe winter damage in these counties they've seen in recent memory. Crews from other cooperatives went to help. They included Wake EMC, based in Wake Forest; South River EMC, Dunn; Randolph EMC, Asheboro; EnergyUnited, Statesville; Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, Morehead City; Piedmont EMC, Hillsborough; and Central EMC, Sanford.

Fallen branches and trees that came in contact with power lines caused most of the outages. In some cases, crews repaired breaches twice, after tree limbs thawed and snapped back onto power lines previously repaired. Icy conditions also made it especially difficult for crews to reach damaged poles and lines.

Ice coated power lines and trees in the Carvers Creek area of Bladen County, served by Four County EMC.

Forecast sees enough electric power but possible delivery problems

Electricity generation is expected to keep pace with growing North American demand over the next few years, but the wholesale transmission system might not, according to a recent forecast.

The North American Electric Reliability Council said in its 2003–2012 reliability assessment that those responsible for delivering bulk power must closely follow reliability standards to keep the system dependable.

Guaranteeing reliable service will also require close coordination of generation and transmission planning and construction, NERC said. Consumers will require an additional 67,000 megawatts (mw) over the next three years, which will be met easily by a projected 89,000 mw of additional generation in the same period, the council said. Current trends in new generation should guarantee adequate power through 2012, absent serious political, regulatory, fuel pricing and construction problems, it added.

The report painted a less rosy picture for transmission—the system of moving bulk power over great distances. Referring to the nationwide transmission grid, the report said, "Some portions of the grid will not be able to transmit the output of all new generating units to their target markets."

While the grid, overall, is expected to perform with reliability in the near future, portions are nearing their reliability limits as demand drives an increasing flow of power. NERC noted: "Well-known transmission constraints are recurring, while new constraints are appearing as electricity flow patterns change."

Reliability coordinators, transmission planners and systems operators must regularly communicate and coordinate their actions to preserve grid reliability, it said.

The Aug. 14 Northeast-Midwest blackout was a wake-up call for the industry to guarantee the system's smooth operation, said Michehl Gent, NERC president and CEO. The U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force interim report said that the failure of some control areas and reliability coordinators to fully comply with NERC standards contributed to the blackout. Moreover, because Congress failed to pass reliability legislation, "it is more important than ever that NERC's reliability rules are followed by all," Gent said.

Gent told the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that he has called for formal, detailed audits of the council's certified control area operators—responsible for ensuring that electricity loads and generation are balanced on the grid—to determine which are "capable of operating a control area the way we think it should be done."

Bill Pritchard
Electric Co-op Today

A one-day seminar in Greenville and Hickory for declared and prospective political candidates

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have scheduled two day-long sessions aimed at helping candidates for public office, or those intending to run for office, learn more about running effective campaigns.

The Touchstone Energy Campaign Academy will help candidates and their staffs and volunteers learn the dynamics of campaigns from instructors with real-world campaign experience.

The Campaign Academy is non-partisan and open to potential candidates and their staff, first-time candidates or experienced candidates. Topics will include:

- *Effective fund-raising*
- *Campaign planning and finaucing*
- *State campaign finance laws*
- *Campaign communications*
- *The cost of a campaign*
- *Grassroots campaigning*
- *Getting out the vote*

Dan Allen

The academies will be held in Greenville and Hickory from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The Greenville session will be Tuesday, March 23, at the Hilton Hotel. The Hickory session will be Thursday, March 25, at the Holiday Inn Select. The cost for each is $30 per person and includes lunch.

The lunch session will feature a roundtable discussion with elected officials.

Since they were founded in the 1930s and 1940s, cooperatives have built strong relationships with local community leaders, including elected officials. The non-partisan Campaign Academy is aimed at helping voters understand election issues and at building effective political campaigns.

Registration deadline is March 16. If you or someone you know is interested, contact your electric cooperative or Andrew Meehan at the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives at (800) 645-2431. E-mail: Andrew.Meehan@ncemcs.com

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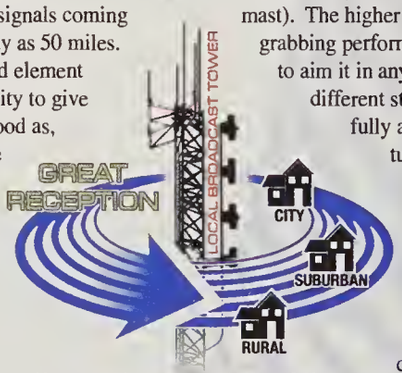
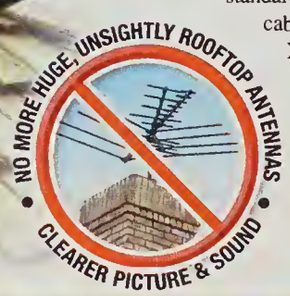
No aiming, rotating or tuning. XiumAir's new 83-channel technology combines an all-in-one device for receiving high-energy TV reception. Unlike most external antennas, the XiumAir doesn't have to be pointed in the direction of transmitters. That's the beauty of spilateral technology. You can mount the dish-like antenna indoors or outside (on your roof or a horizontal mast). The higher the elevation, the better signal-grabbing performance you get. You don't have to aim it in any direction or rotate it for different stations. The XiumAir gives fully automatic multi-directional tuning in any direction for great TV viewing.



No matter where you live, the Xium Spilateral "dish" antenna will collect all of the signals available, up to 50 miles from any direction, without the need for rotating or tuning.

The versatile antenna with many uses. If you have a DSS satellite system, the XiumAir is the ideal complement for receiving local channels without monthly fees. And when high definition broadcast TV arrives in a few years, you will be ready. Plus you can use the antenna now for AM / FM stereo, home-based CB systems, and shortwave radio. The XiumAir Antenna features compact, modern styling that will blend in with almost any decor. The UV-protected housing is made of impact-resistant copolymer, making the exterior resistant to weathering and color change. It includes a standard cable connector for any cable-ready hookup. The XiumAir Antenna delivers maximum local broadcast reception to any television, stereo or any other audio or video receiver, without the use of unsightly, ugly or 'wind damaged' antennas.



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We found our best watch in a history book

In 1922, a small watchmaker in Switzerland patented the first automatic watch to display the day, month and date. Only 7 of these magnificent timepieces were ever made and this watch was almost lost to history. Today, they are so rare that one original chronograph watch would probably fetch more than $300,000 at auction.

These watches were among the most stylish of the roaring 20's. And yet no one has attempted to remake this 1922 classic until now. The Stauer watch design that you see here has been painstakingly recreated from the original functions to please even the most discerning owner. The owner of this classic chronograph watch is sure to look distinguished and set apart from the crowd. From the sweeping second hand to the Roman numerals on the unique ivory-colored face, every detail has been carefully reproduced. This Stauer reissue is a limited series, allowing you to wear a watch far more exclusive than many Rolex, Movado, TAG Heuer or Breitling watches.

The watch has a 21-jewel mechanical movement, the kind desired by fine watch collectors. We have updated this movement with kinetic power thus the watch never needs to be manually wound. The watch comes in a beautiful case and comes with both interchangeable black and brown leather bands.

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The Carolina Country
GARDEN

Spring: March - April - May

The Carolina Country GARDEN

An all-seasons guide for growing

By Hank Smith

photo © Todd Gaul

Henry J. "Hank" Smith has advised Carolina Country gardeners since August 1983, making him the most senior of our contributors. He's not only outlasted everyone else, he's also maintained his popularity.

"Hank's Gardening Guide" is among the best-read pages of this magazine. Hardly a month goes by without someone's asking us for Hank's phone number. (We don't reveal it, because Hank would be answering calls all day long.)

So we've assembled here a collection of Hank's gardening tips for year-round reference. While he considers the variances among North Carolina's regions, Hank advises gardeners to pay attention to the seasonal conditions affecting their own gardens.

A Florida native, Hank Smith was a staff member at North Carolina State University's Horticultural Science Department before becoming a fulltime consultant. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in horticultural science at the University of Florida. He served fellowships at Harvard and Penn State universities, worked as an Extension specialist at Mississippi State and was landscape editor for Southern Living magazine. He's hosted a weekly TV program, published many articles and photographs, and served as an advisor and officer to several horticultural societies.

Hank Smith is also popular among the residents of the Glenaire retirement community (2207 Fernglen Place, Cary, NC 27511), and he continues to lecture on horticulture when he can.

— The Editors

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

Cool-weather vegetable crops now being harvested should be followed by plantings of warm-weather ones like snap beans, squash, green beans, lima beans, okra, lettuce, tomatoes and beets.

When setting tomato and green pepper plants, place collars around the bases to protect from cutworms. Plastic cups with bottoms removed make good collars.

Stake tall-growing tomato plants, or place wire cages over them. As plants grow, secure them to the support with strips of sturdy cloth or discarded pantyhose.

Vegetables can be used as part of the flower garden. For example, carrots to edge a flowerbed (the foliage gives a fern-like edging); strawberries as a low-edging plant or groundcover; cabbages backed with zinnias, with petunias in front.

Plant green beans, cucumbers, squash and other warm season vegetables.

Remove blooms from herbs to direct plant energy to produce foliage, not flowers.

Trees and Shrubs

The first spring is a critical time for newly-planted shrubs and trees. Water them deeply once or twice a week during dry periods.

Most shrubs respond well to a general feeding of ¼- to ½-pound balanced plant food per square yard of area covered by plant. Do not permit fertilizer to touch stems or leaves. Distribute fertilizer evenly. If there is heavy mulch, or soil is badly packed, cultivate well. Water fertilizer into soil.

Remove faded blooms when they appear on bedding plants and shrubs.

Dig and transplant small seedlings of nandinas that have grown up under established plants. If established plants have grown tall and scraggly, cut away older, thicker stems at ground level.

Flowers

When Easter lilies are in bloom, pluck the stamens to remove yellow pollen as soon as it is visible. This prevents ripening pollen from discoloring petals, making flowers last longer.

Even shady spots can contribute summer color from annuals. The following endure somewhat heavy shade: petunia, balsam, calliopsis, godetia, lobelia, cockscomb, flowering tobacco, periwinkle and impatiens.

Good bedding plants for bright sunny spots: portulaca, zinnia, marigold, salvia and celosia.

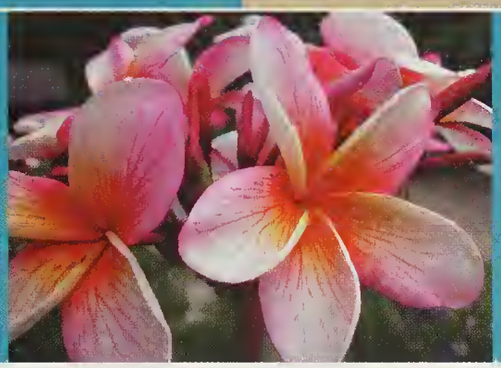
Plant an evergreen vine such as English ivy or Carolina jasmine along with clematis vine. This provides a green camouflage when clematis is bare of leaves in winter.

Make massed plantings of zinnias, marigolds and petunias. These most popular of annuals contribute summer-long color accents.

For autumn color, set out chrysanthemums. Pinch their tips when plants are about six inches tall. This causes bushy plants and often increases flower production.

As blooms fade, cut daffodils, tulips and hyacinths if not done earlier. Since foliage is manufacturing food for next year's growth, let it remain until leaves mature and turn brown or yellow.

If daffodils multiply and become crowded clumps that produce little to no blooms, lift, divide and replant.



The Carolina Country
GARDEN

Summer: June - July - August

When mums are ready for pinching back, the tip growth that is removed will root easily in coarse, damp sand. In three weeks, roots will have formed. By blooming time, these make good plants.

Lawn

Apply lawn-weed prevention to keep crabgrass seeds from sprouting and becoming summer weeds.

If large trees cast shade on the lawn and the shaded area is not planted with a groundcover, apply a complete fertilizer such as 6-12-12, 5-10-5, 8-8-8, or 12-6-6 at a rate of 30 to 35 pounds per 1,000 square feet. This relieves competion of trees and lawn grasses for nutrients.

Fertilize summer grasses such as Zoysia, Bermuda and Centipede. Do not fertilize fescue until fall.

Start groundcovers of liriope, Mondo grass and English ivy where grass refuses to grow.

Treatments

Five tablespoons of bleach in a gallon of water, shaken well, will help prolong the life of cut flowers. Keep the vase full of solution.

To attract hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies, include bee balm in flowerbeds.

Fertilize azaleas with special azalea and camellia food, or use a balanced fertilizer like 8-8-8 or 10-10-10.

Among good mulches for plants: pine needles, oak leaves, old sawdust, cotton and peanut hulls, shredded bark and bark chips, and peat moss that has been soaked in water for several hours.

Indoors

Water-retaining polymers added to soil at planting time for potted plants will help hold moisture.

Spider plants are well adapted to hanging baskets in partial shade.

Roots trailing out of drainage holes or bulging through the top layer of soil indicate that potted plants need more room. But you may want to remove plant from container and examine root ball before deciding to repot.

Miscellaneous Tips

If you enjoy feeding birds in winter, then plant a row of sunflowers in the back or side of your garden. These tall-growing annuals produce enormous heads of rich, oily seeds. In late summer when flowers have matured, cut and dry them. Next winter, these seed-studded disks will be a true delicacy for birds.

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

Green beans are a good temporary groundcover, easy to eliminate when a permanent use of soil takes place. They also enrich the soil.

On cantaloupes, male flowers usually appear first and do not produce fruit. Some later blooms are female. Bees must transfer pollen from the male to the female flowers for normal development of fruit.

Eggplants need full sun all day.

Replant summer vegetables as they fade and become non-bearing. Vegetables to plant during late July and August include pole beans, tomatoes, okra, peppers, eggplants, potatoes and squash.

If you preserve figs, gather them several days before they fully ripen to reduce damage from splitting and souring.

Trees and Shrubs

Butterfly shrub (buddleia) is difficult to successfully transplant. The best bet is to do root cuttings.

Apply heavy mulch to shrubs during the hot, dry days of summer.

Woody ornamentals such as azaleas, oleanders and hydrangeas now can be propagated from cuttings. Place cuttings in moist, well-drained medium. Most cuttings placed in semi-shaded locations should root within 10 to 12 weeks.

Remove suckers and water sprouts from fruit and nut trees so fertilizer and moisture will be channeled into development of next year's fruiting wood.

As blooms fade on vitex and crepe myrtle, remove faded blooms for another flowering period before cold weather.

Flowers

Sow seed of flowering annuals such as alyssum, nicotinia, zinnia, balsam, cosmos, annual phlox, marigold and tithonia for late summer and autumn bloom.

You can get color from annuals by sowing fast-maturing seeds. Choices include zinnia, cosmos, cleome and sunflower.

Prune hardy climbing roses when they have finished blooming.

Feed chrysanthemums every two weeks with a complete fertilizer until flower buds begin to show color.

Summer annuals need a monthly feeding of 5-10-5 fertilizer. Check regularly for pest problems. Keep dead blooms pinched from plants.

Caladiums do well in shaded areas and withstand sun if kept watered. Fertilize every two weeks. The better tubers are fed, the larger they will become before winter storage in a frost-free location.

Geraniums are sensitive to over-watering. Apply only after soil becomes almost completely dry.

Gather statice, strawflowers, cockscomb and other flowers to be dried for winter bouquets. Place in paper bags, stems tied into bundles. Hang in a dry place.

continued on p. 14

The Carolina Country GARDEN

Fall: September - October - November

continued from p. 13

Transplant daylilies and irises. New transplants will have time to become well established before cold weather.

Lawn

Heavily compacted soil is most easily aerated with the mechanical device that looks a bit like a lawn roller with hollow tubes attached.

In areas of established groundcovers, punch a series of holes over the beds to carry water down to the roots.

Close mowing of lawn grasses during hot, dry weather weakens grass, allowing crabgrass and other weeds to become established before the lawn can recover.

Encourage vining groundcover plants such as English ivy and Carolina jessamine (good evergreen vines) by training runners to cover bare spots. Anchor with hairpins made from four or five inch sections of heavy wire. Wire coat hangers are a good source.

Variegated liriope, easily transplanted at any time of year, creates a good groundcover for narrow, confined areas. Secure container grown or separately existing with a sharp knife. An established clump usually gives four clumps.

Treatments

Newspapers, 8 or 10 sheets in thickness, make good mulch for the vegetable garden. Moisten soil well before placing papers. Sprinkle papers often to preserve moisture. This also aids in preventing germination of weed seeds.

Discourage red spiders on azaleas by spraying a fine mist of water on upper and lower sides of leaves.

Indoors

Houseplants tend to revitalize if moved outdoors in the summer. Move them to dappled shade for a few days, then to a spot shaded from noonday sun.

Geraniums can be rooted for winter houseplants in pots of mellow, loamy soil. Place in well-drained pots. Do not over water. Give broken sunlight. In early October, place indoors in a sunny window.

Miscellaneous Tips

Fire ants are a problem in mid-to-late summer. Check with your local county extension office for best controls in your community.

Squirrels sometimes uproot bedding plants but do not eat the roots or leafy growth. Success has been found in scaring squirrels from plant beds by placing small artificial rubber snakes among the plants.

Visit arboretums and show gardens to gather ideas for your personal landscape project and to see and examine new plant materials.

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

When sowing fine seed such as lettuce, mix seed with dry white sand. This helps to ensure proper distribution.

Now is a good time to plant a strawberry patch. These ornamental plants with white blossoms and red fruit make attractive, low-edging plants for flowerbeds.

You can plant a fall garden and expect good results from lettuce, radishes, cabbage, spinach, onions, beets and mustard. Supply sufficient moisture.

In the fall you can sow seeds of cilantro (coriander) and dill herbs. Also, set out transplants or sow seeds of parsley.

Winter squash and pumpkins store better if you leave a few inches of stem attached when you harvest them.

Trees and Shrubs

Cut away panicles of blooms on crepe myrtles. Plants bloom on new wood, producing more flowers before frost. Allow plants to grow into trees, because much of the beauty lies in twisting trunks in winter when top growth is gone.

Continue deadheading (removing blooms) of flowering shrubs.

If leaves of shrubs are not diseased when they drop, leave them beneath plants to serve as over winter mulch. As they decay, they add nutrients to the soil.

Flowers

Cut faded blooms from roses to prevent plant from producing hips, the fruit that contains the seed. This diverts plant energy to producing flower buds instead of seeds.

Peonies usually respond best to late summer or fall planting. They are somewhat undemanding in soil requirement, often succeeding in heavy clay. Plants prefer full sun or light shade.

Order tulip bulbs for planting later in the year. Store bulbs under refrigeration at 35 to 40 degrees for 60 days immediately before planting.

Before planting bulbs in dry, hard soil, work in a 4-to 6-inch layer of compost or old sawdust and about two quarts of complete commercial fertilizer per 100 square feet.

Climbing roses need to be well anchored to supports. Winter winds can cause damage if they're allowed to sprawl on ground.

As chrysanthemum flowering ceases, cut back tops. Tender varieties winter best in a cold frame. If that's unavailable, give the roots heavy mulch.

If October and November are dry, give perennials a deep final soaking so they will go dormant in good condition. They'll be less subject to winterkill.

Lawn

Lawns need about an inch of water a week. When rainfall is scant, measure the

The Carolina Country
GARDEN

Winter: December - January - February

amount applied by using coffee cans at equal distance within the sprinkler coverage. When cans have about an inch of water in them, the lawn will have enough water.

Fertilize tall fescue, fine fescue, and Kentucky bluegrass. Use a complete fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 analysis. If reseeding is needed, do so now. Reseeding can be done in the spring, but seeds take better in the cool days of autumn.

The key to successful grass seed germination is seed-to-soil contact and continual seed moisture. During warm temperatures, this could mean watering often. Sometimes lawn areas require aerating and dethatching to achieve good seed germination.

Treatments

As soon as the temperature drops below 85 degrees and is expected to remain so for at least two days, it is safe to spray broadleaf evergreens with oil emulsion to control scale. Applying oil sprays when the weather is too hot can be damaging to plants.

Hand pick slugs or set out pans of beer to trap these nighttime nibblers. If you spread poison bait, be careful to keep it away from children and pets.

When you collect leaves for mulch, select those that curl as they fall such as maple, oak and birch. Flat leaves can create soggy soil. Mix pine straw with broad leaves to help prevent packing.

A good way to eliminate many insects in the soil is to plow in the fall. Let soil lie fallow over winter. Don't smooth soil surface down into an even layer.

Indoors

For low-light spots in a room, plant pots of low-growing Fittonia. It grows slowly and requires constant moisture and a monthly feeding of liquid fertilizer. Fittonia does well in a dark corner.

Miscellaneous Tips

Keep on alert for sales on garden equipment such as tillers, mowers, hoses and weed-eaters. Garden centers want to sell these items to make room for holiday merchandise.

Landscape planning involves more than beauty. Consider these major factors: Is the plan functional and suitable? Is it economical? Does it require too much maintenance? Sometimes it pays to consult a landscape architect, landscape gardener, or a master gardener from your local cooperative extension service.

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

Remove grass and weeds from vegetable and flower gardens so they don't become a haven for insect eggs and diseases that can attack summer gardens.

Till garden soil to expose wintering insects and their eggs to killing temperatures. Continue to apply compost and other organic materials to vegetable and flower garden sites. Spade in 3 or 4 inches. This prepares the soil for spring plantings.

Sprinkle used coffee grounds on the garden. They're a mild organic fertilizer, and they repel many pests. Earthworms like them, too.

Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs planted now usually have ample time to become established before spring's warm weather arrives.

Considerable root activity occurs during our average winters. In case of severe freezes, mulch heavily from the trunks to the area above the end tips of roots.

After selecting varieties of shade trees, it's important to place the tree with ample distance from the house, drive, patio or deck. Small trees can be planted at a distance of 15 feet; tall, spreading trees should be placed as much as 40 feet away.

When rainfall is scant, continue to water trees and shrubs. Plants need soil moisture even when temperatures are low.

More shrubs are killed in winter by lack of water than by low temperatures.

Take care in pruning pine trees. If a pine branch is shortened, there are no side branches left with dormant living buds to provide new growth.

If a plant needs cutting back, leave severe pruning until late winter or early spring, just before plants will be putting forth new growth.

Shrubs that bloom in mid-to-late summer such as vitex, Eleagnus, crepe myrtle and althea should have any necessary pruning before spring's warm weather arrives.

Flowers

Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs. Caladiums and gladioli are outstanding plants in this group.

If you've been chilling tulip bulbs in the refrigerator, remove them and get them in the ground before Christmas.

Cut back chrysanthemums every month or six weeks to keep plants compact. They will spread and produce masses of flower-producing stems.

Increase stock of perennials by digging/dividing/resetting these: chrysanthemums, daylily, Shasta daisy, aster, coreopsis and gaillardia.

Lawn

While weather is still cool, plant shade-tolerant groundcover to carpet areas where growing grass is a problem, like underneath shade trees. Some suggestions for shade-tolerant groundcover are vincas, ajugas, liriope, pachysandra or English ivy. Liriope is useful for planting in narrow restricted spaces.

Treatments

Never place manure in the planting home.

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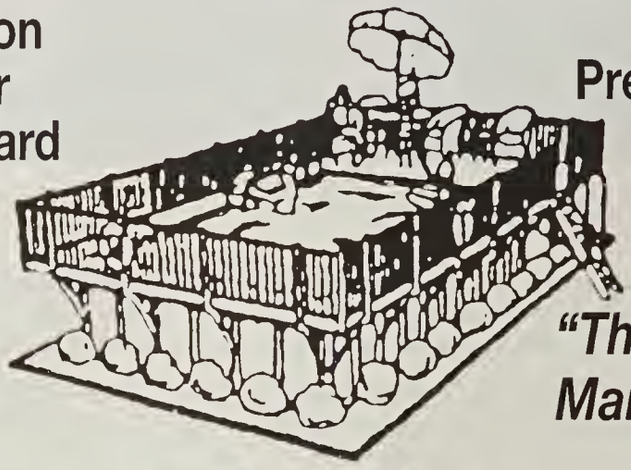

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A selection of inside stories about how you

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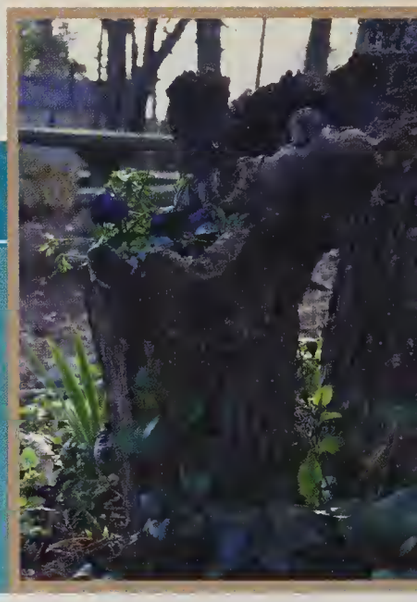


Perry Smith made this garden memorial
See page 21.

Thanks to everyone who sent us your gardening secrets. The rest of us surely can learn from these.

Next month we'll publish your stories about "The Camping Trip I Will Never Forget." (Deadline was Feb. 15.) The deadline is March 15 for your stories on "What We Did When the Power Went Out." See other themes on page 20.

LISTEN TO GRANNY

Growing up with grandparents who lived on a farm gave me a pretty good education on planting a garden. I admit that I didn't pay much attention to the cotton and soybeans, but seeing that I really liked vegetables and flowers, I listened to Granny. She believed in planting by the moon. She told me to put a rusty nail in the hole when transplanting tomatoes. She put ashes from the woodfire around roses and dahlias, and she always used newspapers for weed control. I use her methods and have a very pretty garden.

Olivia Jernigan
Goldsboro
Tri-County EMC

JUG PLANTS IN A SMALL YARD

I lived in a house with a small fenced-in front yard. Money was tight, and I had no plow. I got to thinking how in the world would I plant tomatoes, green beans and cucumbers and still share the yard with three dogs.

So I took eight, 20-gallon plastic jugs, cut the top out, cut a whole in the bottom about the size of a half dollar, and then filled with potting soil. In six buckets I put one tomato plant and a 5-foot stick. I placed them in two rows, three feet apart.

In the seventh bucket, I put in three string bean plants and placed it against the fence.

In the eighth bucket, I put in two cucumber plants and placed it against the fence three feet away.

Every Monday I would take a gallon jug, put in one tablespoon of Miracle Gro and fill with water. Each plant got one gallon. On Friday, each plant got two gallons of plain water only.

My tomato plants grew taller than me (5 feet, 6 inches) and really put out the tomatoes!

I put some on the porch to ripen. Some went bad so I just pushed them off to the ground. One day I looked beside the porch, and lo and behold there was a plant growing. I put blocks around it and started doing the same with it. It grew as tall as the porch!!

My string beans ran up and around the fence, as did my cucumbers.

I was blessed with so much, I was giving tomatoes, string beans and cucumbers out to friends, neighbors, family and strangers that would stop and admire the plants.

There was no weeding and the dogs had plenty of room to run.

We had plenty to eat until things got better. We were able to share and make some new friends.

Carol Killough
Indian Trail
Union Power Cooperative

HORSE MANURE AND BLACK PLASTIC

Trying to have a garden can be a difficult job with a lot of hard work. I suppose having a garden tractor or a tiller could make the job a lot easier. I do not have either. But the love of fresh tomatoes and garden vegetables always makes me want to grow my own. I love going to the garden for fresh produce, but do not like the hard work that goes with it. Trying to work smarter and not harder, I came up with a plan about how to grow vegetables the easy way.

My brother who lives across the road from me, Joe, has a friend who needed a place to dispose of his shavings from his horse barn. He just scrapped all the horse manure out back of his barn to be moved someday. Joe has a small dump truck, so he brought 20 some loads of this rich soil to my garden. What was I to do with the mounds of rich dirt?

I took heavy black plastic and threw it on each pile. Not wanting to have the walkways filled with grass, I put down old car carpet with plastic backing on it. This has lasted for many years.

I used scissors to cut slits in the black plastic, then I put the plants in. The plastic keeps the soil warm, and makes the plants grow. You do not have to water the plants. The plastic keeps the soil moist enough for plants to grow. Using the rotted horse manure, I had no need for chemical fertilizer, making this an organic garden.

Instead of pulling weeds and hoeing the garden, I can walk out in the morning with a cup of coffee and watch the plants

grow. They were beautiful tomatoes and the sweetest cantaloupes you have ever eaten.

Marie Kidd
Seagrove
Randolph EMC

CITRUS FRUIT FERTILIZER

I have been a gardener and landscaper for 30 of my 48 years on earth. In past years I have learned many gardening secrets. Perfection comes from patient practice.

The secret I share with all readers is this: In planting many vegetables, shrubberies and perennial flowers, while preparing the soil I quarter or section a citrus fruit to use as an alkaline acid fertilizer, which is totally biodegradable. Therefore, when decomposure begins, my pH balance is at a normal ratio slowly feeding what I have planted. The neatest thing is I work less, letting this natural technique do a lot of the work for me. I spend a lot more time instead just enjoying the beauty of plant life.

Phillip R. Henson
Cashiers
Haywood EMC

ADD A LOT OF LOVE

The love of seeing things grow is a great secret within itself. If you don't love it you won't take care of it. Pet it, pamper it, water it, feed it and by all means, keep all the outlaws (weeds) away from the prize. The weather and location of the plant goes a long way for success.

I planted a watermelon seed that was about ½ inch long. It produced two melons, one weighing in at 222 pounds and one at 200 pounds. From a half-inch beginning to a finished fruit of 79½ inches end to end, 21 inches wide and 53 inches around the width. For Wilkes County and the foothills, this one was pretty nice.

Try this recipe for watermelons: Bushels of love, one good seed, eight ounces balanced fertilizer, eight ounces cotton seed meal, plenty of sun and heat, God's help. Water only when heat and rain permit. Good luck to all.

Nancy Stanley
Roaring River
Surry-Yadkin EMC

MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR

This is my daughter, my son and my dad planting the garden one year (above).

Moma and Poppa married and built a house here in 1949. Poppa had a large garden every year and my brothers and I helped. We enjoyed the fruits of our labor, especially the watermelons and strawberries.

When I married we built a house in the woods behind Moma and Poppa. The garden is between the two houses. Our children loved to help in the garden by the time they were 2½ years old. As they grew, my sons especially enjoyed driving the tractor. We enjoyed fresh food from the garden and always shared with friends and relatives.

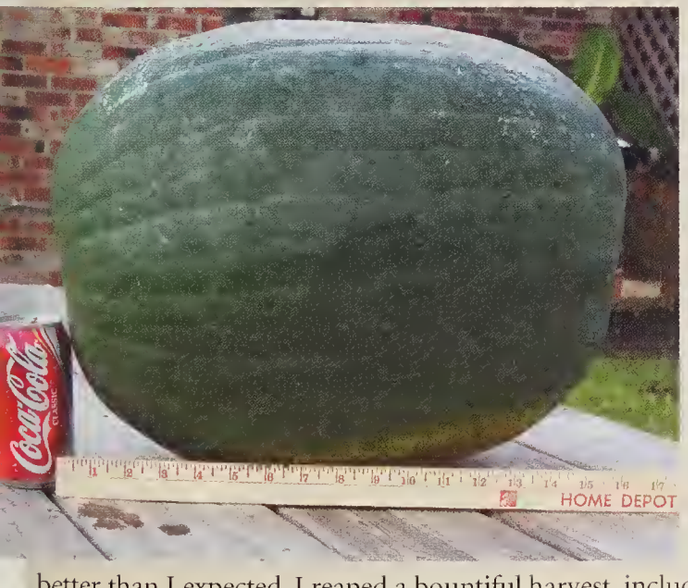
We have many happy memories of times in the garden. One day last year Moma, who is 72, was exhausted from spreading seeds and laid down in the bed of Poppa's pick-up truck with her head on a bag of fertilizer. One of our dogs hopped up there, laid his head on her tummy and rested with her. Moma got tickled at him and we all laughed at how funny Moma looked.

I treasure these pictures of my children helping Poppa in the garden. They've grown up and moved to homes of their own now, but still stop by and help in the garden occasionally.

Jan S. Clark
Indian Trail
Union Power Cooperative

PLANT NEXT TO THE CHICKEN COOP

One of the things I love about rural life is having a small garden. But every year, I have less and less time to hoe, weed and tend it. In 2002, I decided to be practical and not plant a garden at all. Practical or not, I really missed having something to harvest in the fall. So I thought about it a while and came up with an idea for the perfect garden.



Last spring, I planted six watermelon plants and three tomato plants in the thick grass beside my chicken coop. All summer, I let the plants grow untended. The natural chicken guano fertilized them as it washed downstream when it rained. The grass grew tall and kept them moist and weed-free. When insects appeared, I turned a rooster loose for a couple of weeks to take care of them.

Benevolently neglecting my tiny garden worked even better than I expected. I reaped a bountiful harvest, including one watermelon that weighed in at 65 pounds.

Needless to say, I'll be using the same method this year.

Sharon Hartung
Currie
Four County EMC

MINERAL OIL

To prevent corn earworms, I squirt a few drops of mineral oil (from regular oilcan) in the silk of each ear when the silk first appears.

Ralph Clayton
Balsam Grove
Haywood EMC

continued on p. 20

continued from p. 19

HOW TO GROW BULBS

When I moved from New Mexico to North Carolina in 2000, I was enthralled with the glory of spring bulbs. Much to my dismay, my new neighbors said the voles and squirrels would eat most if not all of my bulbs.

Determined to grow tulips and more, I set out to research a method to successfully grow bulbs. I read an article that said those little destructive bulb robbers did not like the grit of sand. In the late fall, I dug 10-inch deep bulb trenches layering each with one inch of sand, two inches of good forest mulch mixed with bulb food, the row of bulbs, one inch of sand around bulbs, two inches of forest mulch, two inches of sand and mulch mixed together, and finally one inch of sand on top.

Much to my delight, the following spring, all my bulbs began to poke their leaves above ground. I had won the battle. All my bulbs were blooming and I was ecstatic.

Nita Resler
Taylorsville
EnergyUnited

FOR TOMATOES AND OKRA

In the fall of the year, I get the weeds and grass out of my garden. I take my push plow and plow two rows, one for tomatoes and one for okra. I put lime and compost in the rows. In the winter I put all the potato peelings and eggshells in rows. Next spring, a week before I plant, I put fertilizer in the rows. I put newspapers on each side of the rows, which will keep the weeds and grass from growing around my okra and tomatoes. The day I set out the tomatoes, I put a tablespoon of Epsom salts under each plant and water all the plants real good.

It is now November 6, and I still have two tomatoes from this year's garden to eat.

Monnie Sullivan
Lillington
South River EMC

A 1950 FARMALL CUB

My husband, Mark Oliphant still cultivates using his grandfather's 1950 Farmall Cub tractor. Through the winter we place horse manure on the soil to prepare it for spring planting. He is the hardest working man that I know, and clearly the success of our garden.

Christel Oliphant
High Point
EnergyUnited

TO KEEP CABBAGE AND POTATOES

People in the mountains a while back had to improvise to keep the food they grew all winter. We all have heard about root cellars and springhouses, but here are two unique ways to save cabbage and potatoes that few flatlanders have heard. To save cabbage, pull it up by the roots, turn head down and bury back in the ground with only enough root showing to pull back up. To save potatoes, dig a hole, line with straw, put in potatoes. Cover with tarpaper and straw and finally, dirt piled up. This could take the boredom out of pintos and fatback on a cold winter day.

Randolph Rash
Dudley
Tri-County EMC

STAY STRICTLY ORGANIC

My gardening secret is hardly a secret at all. I loudly and proudly proclaim it to anyone who will listen: I am an organic gardener. Most people are amazed at the quality and abundance of my produce. All of this is accomplished without pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers.

There are many reasons to garden organically. First, it is very cost effective. Because my organic kitchen and yard waste is composted to provide nutrients

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Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

MAY 2004
"What We Did When the Power Went Out"
Smart – and maybe not-so-smart – ways to cope during an outage.
Deadline: March 15

JUNE 2004
"Being a Teenager Today"
What are you going through? Or: How does it compare to when you were one?
Deadline: April 15

JULY 2004
"Our Money Pit"
What was the biggest waste of money you remember?
Deadline: May 15

AUGUST 2004
"Was I Wrong!"
Lessons you learned the hard way.
Deadline: June 15

SEPTEMBER 2004
"My Favorite Photo"
North Carolina people and places. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and printable size.
Deadline: July 15

OCTOBER 2004
"If I Were Governor of North Carolina"
What would you do?
Deadline: August 15

NOVEMBER 2004
"Mama's Cooking Was Always the Best"
Send a recipe, if you have one, and photos.
Deadline: Sept. 15

DECEMBER 2004
"Meeting Your Grandparents"
Something you never knew about a grandparent.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less. We retain reprint rights.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd. Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

for enriching my soil, I don't have to purchase costly fertilizers or other amendments. Herbicides and pesticides are also products I need not buy. Second, my husband and I are able to eat food that is free from chemicals and toxins. Last, my gardening does not negatively impact the environment. Since we live on a creek near the Neuse River, this is of critical importance.

I have gardened organically for over 30 years. It's the only gardening technique I'd ever use.

Paula Kology
Oriental
Tideland EMC

ENJOY YOUR PLANTS

My gardening secret is to enjoy my plants, especially those given to me in memory of my parents. I have kept them alive through the years with careful watering and correct placement for sunlight. I am able to preserve a wonderful memory of country living by planting a flower in a tree trunk. I took a rotten dogwood stump from my homeplace and filled it with soil. The tree trunk is upside down (root side up) in my flower garden, and I planted a pansy in it for joy and remembrance. (See photo, page 18.)

Perry Smith
Huntersville
EnergyUnited

FIVE TIPS, GUARANTEED

My tried-and-true vegetable gardening secrets are absolutely, positively guaranteed to work.

1) Get your husband to do it. I mean the tilling, the hoeing, the hauling of compost and mulch, etc. You might want to keep the picking chore for yourself. You have to contribute something, after all.

2) Don't overlook your local neighborhood produce stand. You can buy stuff there and tell everyone that you grew it yourself.

3) Be careful what you grow – you might have to eat it. Example: In July, "Gosh, this okra is so good! Better put up as much as we can." September: "Still good okra." November: "I'm getting tired of okra." January: "I hate okra."

4) Let the grass take over your garden. You can find neat things in there. I have found cats, shovels, snakes, contorted vegetables, even missing jewelry.

5) If you get a clear shot at the groundhog, take it. You will be sorry later if you don't.

Jeannette Haynes
Maiden
EnergyUnited

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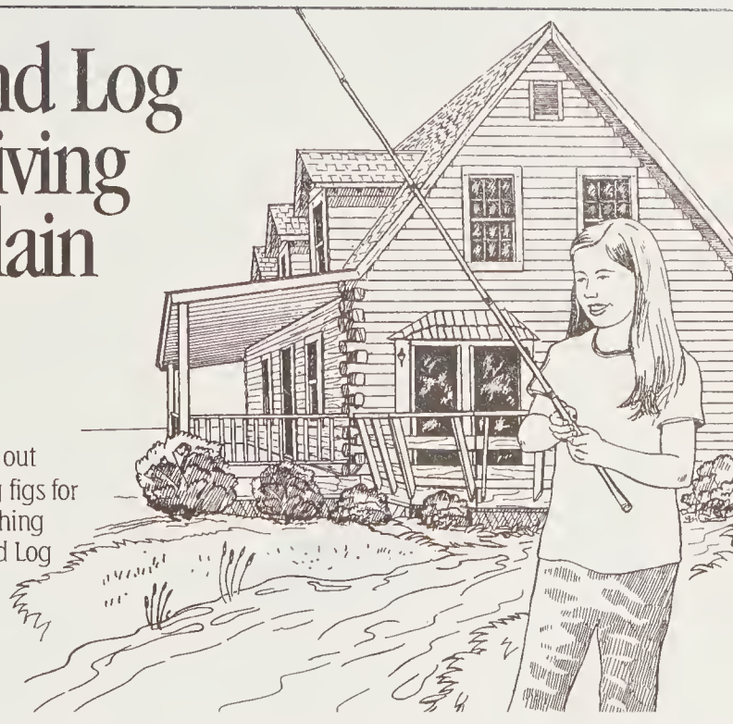

Whether it's getting out the cane poles or picking figs for preserves, there is something magical about Southland Log Home living. You can almost smell the pecan pie warming in the oven just by looking at its down-home beauty. Have fun. Design one for yourself! Send us a rough sketch or photo of a home you like, plus a floorplan, and we'll send you a free detailed materials and price list!

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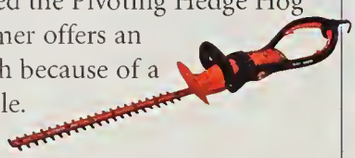
A Guide To New Gardening Tools

by Laura C. Martin

Although the idea of slipping bare hands into the soil to begin a garden elicits a lovely image, anyone who has ever gardened knows that it's more romantic than real. Gardening is a lot of fun, but it's a lot of work. Fortunately, there are many products on the market to make it easier. From digging to composting and planting to pruning, there's a tool to ease the workload. Some of the following products are tried-and-true tools with a new twist, others are so unusual and innovative we thought they were worth including.

Power-Lever Hand Pruners (Fiskar): Any gardener knows that hand pruners are essential for a wide variety of chores; Fiskar has manufactured one of the best. It cuts branches up to ¾-inch in diameter but minimizes strain and fatigue. The lever mechanism is built into the handles. Blades are hardened steel that last years. $19.95, lifetime warranty.

Pivoting Hedge Trimmer (Black & Decker): Called the Pivoting Hedge Hog XR, this trimmer offers an extended reach because of a pivoting handle. Adjustable to two different positions, this is great for trimming and shaping hedges and bushes. The 24-inch blade cuts up to ¾-inch. Dual-action blades move counter to one another, making for a smoother cut and reducing vibration. $79.99, two-year warranty.



Mantis Electric Tiller: Complete your lawn maintenance and gardening with less time and effort using the lightweight, easy-to-use Mantis Electric Tiller. Using patented serpentine tines, the tiller tills, cultivates, aerates and digs at various speeds and depths to create showcase gardens and functional yards. $299, lifetime warranty.

Back Porch Compost Tumbler (Gardener's Supply): If you like the idea of composting but not the idea of walking across the yard to dump kitchen scraps on an unsightly pile of decomposing material, this is for you—a polyethelene drum on a tubular steel frame. Place the materials inside, turn the drum a few times and, within weeks, your coffee grounds will be rich compost for the garden. It's neat, easy and takes up little space. $199.99.

Topsy-Turvy Planter (Gardener's Supply):

If you love to participate in the race to pick the first tomato of the summer, look into this: a grow bag you can hang from a deck or porch. Fill it with potting soil, plant your tomatoes and let it grow! Plants grow from the bottom of the bag upward. Tomatoes will ripen up to a month earlier than when grown the traditional way, and no weeding or staking is necessary. $19.95.

Precision English Seeder (Gardener's Supply): For gardeners who love to plant from seed, this gadget will help put those tiny seeds exactly where you want them, saving seeds and eliminating the need for thinning. Squeeze the bulb to vacuum up seeds, then place them exactly where you want them. Three tip sizes for different kinds of seeds. $24.95.

Rechargeable 12-inch Trimmer/Edger (Black & Decker): This cordless string trimmer automatically advances the cutting line without requiring a "bump." The handles telescope, making a convenient length for anyone to use, and the weight is moderate: only 6.5 pounds. The trimmer is sold with two 18-volt batteries and a charger. $99.99.

Garden Tool Caddy totes long and short tools.

Gardener's Multi-tool (Smith and Hawken): It folds up like a pocketknife and is a handy tool for gardeners, holding shears, two pruning knives, a bottle opener, a corkscrew and a pruning saw. Weighs less than five ounces. Fits neatly into carrying case. $19.

Garden Tool Caddy (Smith and Hawken): Keep tools handy and organized in this ergonomically designed caddy with easy-rolling pneumatic tires. Powder-coated steel cart is outfitted with space for long- and short-handled tools. Stash gloves, seeds, and twine in the 27-pouch tool organizer, which can slip off to convert to a tool bag with shoulder strap. Removable five-gallon bucket and trash/compost container transport soil amendments and hold garden waste. Tools not included. $129.

Laura C. Martin is a gardening writer and illustrator in Georgia.

by Ashton Richie

How to Deal with Common Lawn Problems

When it comes to the low-down on lawn care needs for 2004, we have some good news and bad news. Due to above average rainfall in 2003 across much of the U.S., lawns should be in pretty good shape this spring, because grass is healthy when it gets enough food and water. However, wet soil also means a bumper crop of weeds, crabgrass and the potential for damaging insects like grubs.

Overall, having a great looking lawn is not that difficult. Just following a few simple steps during the right time of the year can result in a healthy, plush lawn. And, since lawn care is one of the most simple and inexpensive ways to protect the investment you have in your home, it makes a lot of sense to take care of problems early on and save money down the road. Here are a few quick and easy solutions to guarantee lawn owners are seeing green this spring.

Crabby about crabgrass

Because of the heavy rains in 2003 in most regions of the U.S., crabgrass flourished and produced a lot of seeds. If lawns had even a few crabgrass plants last year, chances are, there are thousands of tiny crabgrass seeds lying dormant in lawns during the winter months. Come spring, these seeds will grow into new plants, wreaking horticultural havoc. In early spring, apply a turf builder fertilizer that attacks crabgrass. Also, it is important for lawns to be mowed at one of the higher settings. A tall, thick lawn to shade the soil will discourage new weed seeds from growing.

Weed all about it

Aside from being downright ugly, weeds can cause extensive lawn damage by competing with grass and other plants for water, sunlight and nutrients. And, they don't give up without a fight, so the neighborhood kids can pick dandelions until their fingers are yellow but they will grow right back.

Many weeds have very deep roots that are almost impossible to dig up manually, so it is best to get to them with a product that will kill weeds, roots and all, without harming the "good" grass. In late spring, apply a weed control fertilizer to kill weeds and fill in bare patches for a rich green lawn.

Then follow a regular feeding schedule throughout the year to help create a thick lawn that will not allow any room for new weeds to get started.

Keep (unwanted pests) off the grass

Last summer conditions were ideal for adult beetles to lay grub eggs in the soil. Grubs eat the roots of grass, causing irregularly shaped patches of wilted, dead or dying grass in spring. And, since grubs are the larvae of Japanese and other beetles, when the adult beetles emerge from the ground in early summer, they can cause damage to other plants in the yard. To break the cycle and prevent grubs from appearing this fall, apply a season-long grub control in early summer. If grub damage is apparent this spring with dead patches of lawn, seeding may be necessary.

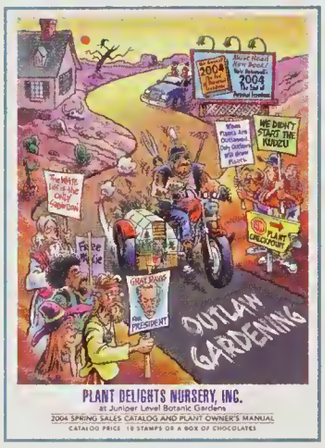
The Scotts Company has developed an easy-to-follow Annual Lawn Care Program™ to help homeowners develop a thick, green lawn that is free of weed and insect problems. By simply entering personalized lawn-related information along with a zip code in the program builder database found on *www.scotts.com*, Scotts can instantly create a custom program to keep lawns healthy and in top physical condition year round—and ensure that seasonal lawn problems will not sneak up on you. And, best of all, there is no need to worry about remembering the program steps, since Scotts will also send personalized e-mail reminders.

Consumer questions and more specific problems can be answered by calling the Scotts Consumer Helpline at 1-800-543-TURF (8873) or logging onto *www.scotts.com* or *www.askashton.com*

Ashton Ritchie is a lawn counselor with The Scotts Company and has been a lawn expert for more than 30 years. The Scotts Company has been a world leader in do-it-yourself lawn and garden consumer products.

Nursery catalog

Plant Delights Nursery at Juniper Level Botanic Gardens offers a fun spring catalog that sparkles with zany copy and distinctive plants. The informative catalog's price, staff says, is 10 stamps or a box of chocolates. The unusual nursery, located south of Raleigh between Panther Branch and Willow Springs, specializes in hostas. It boasts a five-acre display garden, which contains more than 12,000 plants and doubles as a research and development facility. The operation is not a walk-in retail nursery and individual or group tours of the gardens and nursery must be scheduled in advance. Call (919) 772-4794 or visit www.plantdelights.com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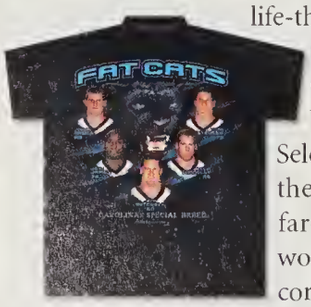
Making a better sprout

BroccoSprouts are the only product that guarantees a consistent level of sulforaphane GS, a natural compound found in broccoli that supports the body's own antioxidant function, says Brassica Protection Products. Developed by scientists, the broccoli sprouts taste a little like radishes and can be used in a wide variety of dishes. Recipes on the company's Web site include stuffed portabellas, grilled chicken wraps, smoked salmon focaccia wedges, vegetable pizza and paisano rigatoni. Stores in North Carolina that carry BroccoSprouts include Harris-Teeter, Fresh Market, Bi-Lo, Lowes Food Market and Wal-Mart SuperCenter. Sunny Creek Farm in Tryon is the company's North Carolina grower. To contact Sunny Creek Farm, call (828) 863-2963. To find out more about BroccoSprouts and other health-oriented food products, call (877) 747-1277 or visit www.brassica.com

Make-A-Wish Foundation

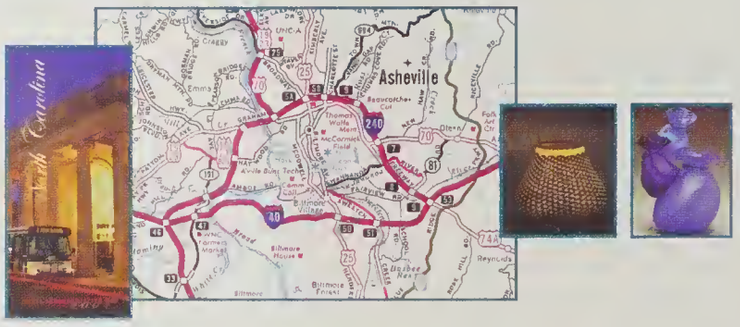
The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Central and Western N.C. is dedicated to granting the wishes of local children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. Covering 51 counties, the organization serves Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem and points in between. Selected children get to visit Disney, meet their celebrity heroes, and visit relatives in far-away places. Make-A-Wish finances its work through individual contributions, corporate donations, foundation grants and special fundraisers. In cooperation with the Carolina Panthers, the foundation is offering a Fat Cats T-shirt showing five Panther athletes with the words "Carolina's Special Breed." 100 percent cotton. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the foundation. $19.99. Call (877) 677-9474 or visit www.ncwish.org



Forge Mountain Foods

Forge Mountain Foods and Gifts take you back to grandmother's kitchen with syrups, preserves, jams, jellies, relishes and pickles. Other products available include Homebaked Cake In A Jar and Buttery Scottish Shortbread. The Flat Rock-based company sells a variety of gift baskets, such as its "Hotter Than Heck" Basket, which includes Habanero Four Pepper Jelly, Hot Honey & Mustard, Scorned Woman Cheese Straws, Hot Habanero Pepper Relish and Hot Southern Vegetable Garden Salsa, for $29.95. Call (828) 692-9470 or visit www.forgemountain.com

2004 map celebrates crafts



North Carolina's 2004 transportation map highlights the state's heritage of craft traditions and its artisans. Featured are potter Ben Owens III in his studio, a basket by textile artist Billie Ruth Sudduth and work by glass artists John Littleton and Kate Vogel. A new Web site listed on the map, www.DiscoverCraftNC.org, directs visitors to craft-based organizations. In addition to highway information, the map includes details about state attractions, distances from city to city, travel resources, emergency contact numbers, and environmental, safety and public transportation efforts. To get a free copy, call (877) 368-4968 or visit www.ncdot.org/public/publications.

Country music CD

"Redheaded Stepchild" presents 12 country-style songs written by singer-songwriter Ray Presnell. Presnell, who lives in Mocksville, offers up titles such as "Hug and a Slug," "Internet Lovin," "Rage on the Road," and "Sweepstake Blues." Presnell's songs have made the Top 40 Independent Country Songs Charts. Musician Mitch Snow of Thomasville performs backup vocals and plays all instruments on the CD. $12.95 includes shipping. Send check or money order to PMC Records, 349 McCullough Road, Mocksville, NC 27028, or e-mail fret12@2it.net, or call (336) 751-4860.

ON THE BOOKSHELF

"North Carolina Afield"

This guide to nature conservancy projects provides information about 92 scenic areas in North Carolina. Divided into Southern Appalachian Mountains, Piedmont, Southern Coastal Plain and Northern Coastal Plain, overviews for each location include the area's flora, fauna and habitats, along with contact information. The accompanying "Trip Planner" offers specific suggestions on directions, trailheads and paddling routes. An index and map for each of the four regions precede chapters. Written by former Nature Conservancy staffer Ida Lynch, the book includes state parks, national forests, wildlife refuges and preserves. Published by John F. Blair. Softcover, 178 pages, color photographs. $14.95. Call (800) 222-9796 or visit www.blairpub.com

Fatherhood wisdom

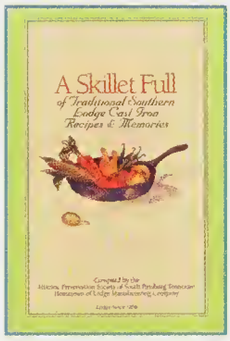
Camp in your own backyard? Ski indoors with your child? Pretend you are on a safari? The recently published book, "Playing in the Rain: Insights and Ideas on Fatherhood" presents clever, engaging ways such as these for fathers to have fun with and relate to their children. Most activities cost little or nothing, including exploring woods, building a table and planting fruit trees. Author and entrepreneur John G. Hastings, who lives in Valle Crucis, presents ideas from his own meaningful experiences with his two children. Hardcover, 63 pages, color photographs. Published by Parkway Publishers. $12.50. Call (800) 821-9155 or visit www.parkwaypublishers.com

"Kinnakeet Cuisine"

They still have old ways in Kinnakeet village on the Outer Banks, including using heirloom recipes. A new cookbook features the villagers' prized dishes such as "Two if by Sea Chowder," oyster cakes, marinated slaw and brown sugar poundcake. Also included is a smattering of Kinnakeet dialect, quotations and a chart for mass-quanity cooking. A portion of the proceeds of the cookbook goes to the restoration of Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station. Written and edited by Jackie Gray and Lois Miller, both of Kinnakeet (also known as Avon). Published by Gateway Publishing Co. Ltd. in North Dakota. Softcover, wire-bound, 48 pages. $12.99 including shipping. Send a check or money order to Hoi Toide Publications, P.O. Box 714, Kinnakeet, NC 27915. Call (888) 247-8476 or e-mail hoitoide@aol.com

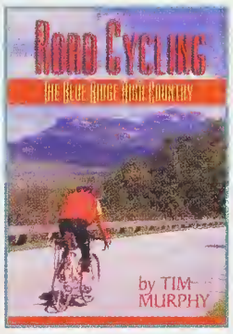
"A Skillet Full"

Tennessee chocolate gravy? A dessert made of zucchini? A new book offers interesting recipes such as these, along with more traditional down-home fare such as pineapple upside down cake, pan-fried okra, fired green tomatoes and at least two dozen cornbread recipes. Stuffed with classic cast-iron recipes, the book also serves up historical tidbits and family stories passed down through several generations of Tennessee families. Published by Lodge Press of South Pittsburg, Tenn. Softcover, 195 pages. $23.95. Call (423) 837-7181 or visit www.lodgemfg.com



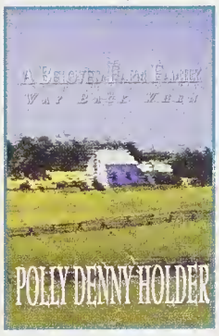
"Road Cycling"

Tim Murphy's book runs the gamut of white-knuckle descents to peaceful creek-side rambles though the Blue Ridge high country. Six mountain and foothill counties in northwestern North Carolina are covered, along with portions of southwestern Virginia and northeastern Tennessee. With a total of 26 rides, each description includes directions, information about road characteristics, maps, elevation profiles, service lists and other outdoor options. Softcover, 267 pages. $14.95. Published by John F. Blair in Winston-Salem. Call (800) 222-9796 or visit www.blairpub.com.



Farm family memoirs

Father rocks in his chair as he carves wood, a girl plays with a baby doll and the aromatic smell of dewberry pie wafts through a farmhouse. Author Polly Holder takes us back to the 1930s in "A Beloved Farm Family Way Back When," a tale of family, neighbors and friends set in the rural Sandhills area of North Carolina. Her story of the fictitious Hamilton family is one of "Christian families in Christian love," facing trials, sorrow and joy. Holder, who lives in Cameron, includes details of FDR's fireside chats, rural suppers and daily farm chores. Published by 1stBooks Library. Softcover, 157 pages. $17.50. Call (910) 245-7244 or visit www.1stbooks.com



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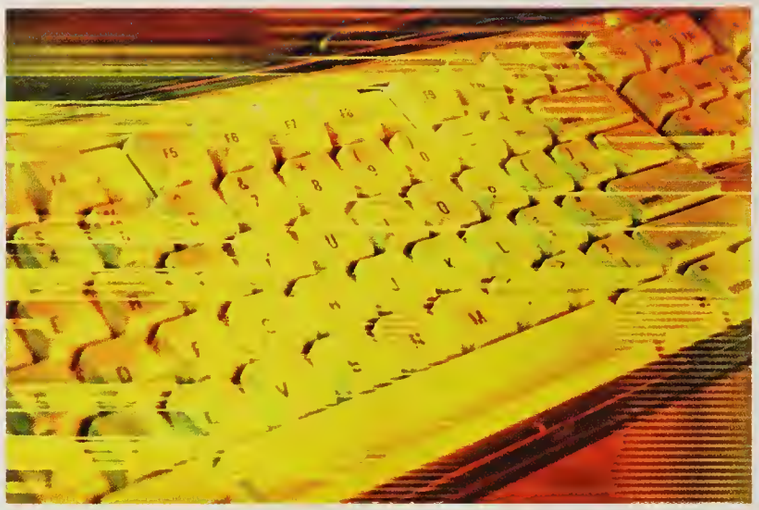
Personal computing advice by Reid Goldsborough

Interactive communication on the Internet: the marketplace of ideas



Has this ever happened to you? You're looking for information about a product, Google to its Web site, and e-mail off your question. Then you hear nothing back. This has happened to me too many times.

It's almost better for a company to refrain from having an Internet presence if it's not going to use the Internet for what it is. By using the Net merely as a low-cost billboard, instead of gaining sales, companies lose goodwill.

The Net is all about interactivity, the sharing of information as well as opinions, experiences, and fellowship. It's the fruition of one of the core and noblest of American ideals, the free and open marketplace of ideas.

Much is made of the Internet as a massive library, an international meet market, and gargantuan shopping mall. But the Net is also a far-reaching soapbox. What the telephone did for personal communication, the Internet is doing for public discourse. The Net has been called the best development in participatory democracy since universal suffrage and the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed.

Because the Internet operates without traditional media gatekeepers controlling what is said, freedom of speech is often the snarly sort. The Net can sometimes seem like a monstrous fountain of obscenity, hate and lies, the ultimate refuge for sociopaths releasing years of pent-up frustration.

But as the Internet approaches early adulthood, it increasingly reflects the diverse interests and activities of those people building it — you. There are lots of ways you can participate in the Net's never-ending worldwide conversation.

Older technologies include e-mail and Usenet discussion groups. Both now have a Web presence, most prominently at Yahoo Groups (http://groups.yahoo.com) and Google Groups (http://groups.google.com) respectively.

These groups cover topics ranging from the buttoned-down and business oriented to the anything-goes. E-mail based groups are typically more tightly controlled, and less prone to argumentation, than Usenet-based.

More and more individual Web sites have their own discussion forums as well. Among the most vigorous are those of newspapers and magazines. At media Web sites, space limitations no longer prevent you from getting your letter to the editor published in full, no matter how long or rambling.

Talk City (www.talkcity.com) is a Web site devoted strictly to talk. You can access bulletin boards, where you post messages for others to see at their convenience, or chat rooms, where you converse with others in "real time."

Some of the most useful online discussions take place at product review sites. Epinions.com (www.epinions.com) is among the best. Reviews must be 100 words or longer and free of objectionable language. You can quickly find reviews others have written in categories ranging from Beauty to Sporting Goods.

Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) for some time has done an excellent job of letting shoppers review the books, CDs, DVDs, and other products it sells. Likewise, Yahoo Shopping (http://shopping.yahoo.com) has done an excellent job of letting shoppers rate its stores.

On the other hand, eBay (www.ebay.com) has put up multiple barriers to communication, making it difficult for customers to reach it and to communicate with one another about current auctions and making it easy for scammers to hide their past behavior. Consequently, fraud is a serious problem there, as has been reported by the FBI. eBay has overreacted to the negative aspect of open communication, which is easy to do. If you happen to find yourself or your company on the receiving end of someone else's "free speech," think twice about responding freely in return.

The best response to cyber-smearing is often to ask about the circumstances that led to the person's dissatisfaction and to explore how you might resolve it together, say experts. The very act of trying to establish a cordial dialogue can go a long way toward resolving or at least lessening conflict.

If want to hold forth in a more personal way, you can create a blog — short for Web log. Blogs are online diaries or journals that you open to the world, or whomever happens to come across it. It can be on whatever you're thinking about or have experienced that day, or it can be more narrowly focused on a topic such as politics, popular culture or business affairs.

Among the best sites for creating blogs or reading those others have created is Blogger (www.blogger.com).

There's no shortage of opportunities for putting your own ideas out there. Some companies may not get the Net, but the millions of individuals using it do.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or http://www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/column.

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A FREE DENTAL CLINIC BRINGS SMILES TO THIS RURAL AREA

By Carla Burgess

Retired police officer Melvin Bowman settles into a chair in the waiting room of the Wyo Dental Clinic. An imposing man, he moves slowly due to the brace on his leg. His foot is damaged from complications of diabetes. He has survived three strokes and back surgery. The financial burden has been overwhelming for Bowman, 65, who retired in North Carolina to be near his wife's family. So when he began suffering from a toothache, it was a pain he decided he'd have to live with.

While working in law enforcement for Anheuser-Busch in Williamsburg, Va., Bowman had access to affordable dental care. Since leaving, he hadn't seen a dentist in 15 years. Then one morning at breakfast, he saw a TV news story about the Wyo clinic, a place on the Yadkin and Davie county line west of Winston-Salem where people in the community could receive free dental treatment. He called and got on the waiting list.

Since his first visit, Bowman has had two teeth pulled and two filled. The volunteer professionals at the clinic also have treated his wife. Bowman says Keith Phillips, the clinic's founder, is a "gentle dentist," adding softly: "If it hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have been able to do it."

Located in the EnergyUnited Touchstone Energy cooperative's service area, the Wyo clinic provides services that include cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, and some partial and full dentures. Operated through donations of money, equipment and supplies, the clinic serves people mostly from Yadkin and Davie counties, but also Wilkes and Surry. Largely rural and agricultural, the region's communities have been hurt by loss of textile jobs, a sluggish economy and, in turn, poverty. People often wait until a dental problem is acute before seeking care, often in the emergency room. There, says Phillips, patients usually receive a stopgap such as antibiotics to treat infection. But the root of the problem remains.

"If a tooth is not hurting, going to the dentist is not a front-burner item, compared to some of the other things they face," said Phillips, 46, who also operates a private practice in Winston-Salem. Given a choice between routine dental work and food on the table, low-income families must eat. Free clinics can help ease this burden, while promoting preventive care.

Like many other dentists, Phillips found he was offering increasingly more free services to poor patients in this office. He dreamed of a way to address the need through a comprehensive approach. Meanwhile, he had been making annual trips to Montego Bay, Jamaica, to volunteer at a weeklong, church-sponsored dental clinic. The pool of dentists, students, surgeons, nurses, hygienists, assistants and other support volunteers who made the trip were eager and willing to regularly donate their time. They needed only a destination. And so Phillips started the Giving Hand Foundation, which now operates clinics in Wyo and Kernersville, as well as seasonal clinics in Jamaica and Paraguay.

"It's been my experience that there's no shortage of people to volunteer," says Phillips. "There are a significant number of folks across the country who would like to start a clinic but have no idea how to go about it, how to find equipment and how to secure facilities." For that reason, the foundation's major goal is shepherding start-up clinics throughout the United States and helping them become self-sufficient. The foundation has given a hand to fledgling clinics in Florida, Tennessee, Minnesota and other parts of North Carolina.

The foundation also provides educational grants and supports world mission trips. It receives donated supplies from manufacturers and dental practices as well as cash contributions from the community. Also, Phillips donates his honoraria from seminars and other professional speaking engagements. And though payment is not required, patients at the Wyo clinic are encouraged to donate what they can to help defray expenses. Quite a few patients are generous with their money, says Phillips, and also their cakes and pies.

Besides the Wyo clinic, which is currently open at least two Saturdays each month, the foundation also supports occasional clinics held in the basement of a Hispanic church in Kernersville. The Wyo clinic has a dedicated facility, a modular building donated by Unifi of Yadkinville.

Phillips credits the success of the clinics to the generous, tireless efforts of many community volunteers. Besides the dental professionals who give their time, many local folk have donated their talents and skills to get—and keep—the clinic's doors open. Phillips' right-hand man is John Lane, a fellow church member who is retired from the Winston-Salem fire department. Lane, a

fix-it guy who keeps equipment running, is a master of improvisation. It was he who fashioned a suction unit for the Paraguay clinic from a $26 wet/dry vacuum from Home Depot. He also helps Phillips collect used equipment from dental offices to give to other free clinics that the foundation mentors. Lane's wife, Pam, the foundation's secretary/treasurer, affectionately calls the pair "Sanford and Son," noting that the men have crammed their basements full of dental salvage. Pam rode shotgun with John to deliver a truckload of chairs and other equipment to a fledgling clinic in Tampa, Fla., last year.

The Lanes' daughter, Crystal, 17, hung colorful wallpaper. Her boyfriend, Casey Doub, helped with plumbing and vinyl siding. Retired schoolteacher Lillian Groce files charts and schedules appointments. Charlotte and Bob Williard do housekeeping and tend the grounds. Bernie Alspaugh created the Foundation's web site (www.givinghand.info) and multimedia presentations. And countless others helped refurbish the building and install the necessary infrastructure for the Wyo clinic's opening in November 2002.

The clinic also has widespread institutional support. Students in the dental assistant and hygienist programs at Forsyth Technical Community College volunteer at the clinic, receiving class credit and valuable experience in return for their assistance. At a recent "sealant clinic" for elementary school children, dental students applied protective tooth coatings that help prevent tooth decay. The health departments of Yadkin and Davie counties, which screen at-risk children in the schools, also helped advertise the sealant clinic. Phillips said the children were so moved by the experience that they took up a collection to buy a new instrument cart for the clinic.

AT WORK IN WYO

On a snowy day in January, the clinic fills up slowly. The interior is as white and bright as the flakes falling outside. A "free clinic" might summon images of a row of dental chairs in a barbershop environment, but that is not the picture here. The spotless clinic has three private exam rooms, a modest-size waiting room and reception area, and a combination boardroom and office. The walls are paneled in white, and the doorways trimmed in oak. There are homey touches like valances on the windows and framed pictures on the walls.

Gina Humble is busy helping Groce in the office and translating for several Hispanic patients. Humble, the foundation's brand new executive director and first and only paid staff member, is fluent in Spanish. She inspired the foundation to do a clinic in Paraguay, where she had worked as a Peace Corps volunteer. Humble's first major task will be to contract with dentists so that the clinic can extend its hours to include weekdays, and to apply for grants to eventually hire a full-time dentist.

Wearing scrubs and masks, registered dental hygienist Jan Welborn and dental assistant Mae Scales work alongside Phillips. They'll see about 15 patients during the four-hour clinic. Phillips is usually assisted by his father, Ken Phillips, also a dentist, but he is away at a funeral today. As a child, Keith Phillips used to tag along with his dad to a free clinic he started in the North Carolina mountains in the 1960s. Though the seed for community service was planted in him early, Keith Phillips taught math at a military boarding school for nearly eight years before deciding to follow in his father's vocational footsteps. He graduated from the University of North Carolina's School of Dentistry in 1988.

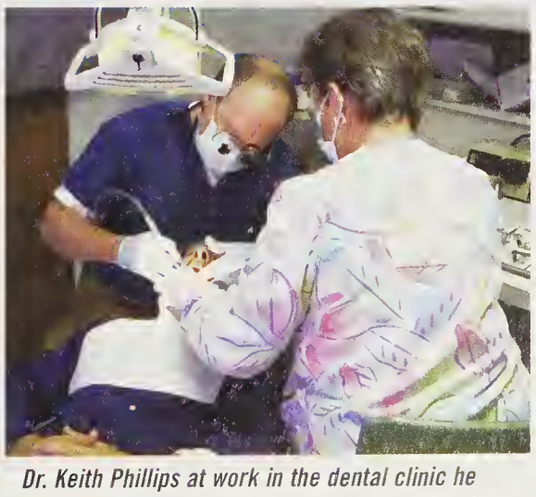
The Wyo volunteers work with speed and precision—a pace at odds with the frenetic atmosphere of the foundation's Third World sister clinics. While the Wyo clinic has treated about 500 patients total, that many people are seen in a single week in Jamaica or Paraguay. With the exception of an ample supply of anesthesia, there are other vast differences. In the sweltering heat of summer, volunteers trek miles through deeply rutted, muddy roads to toil in a cramped room without air conditioning. And though strict licensing requirements limit who can work in U.S. clinics, the foreign clinics make use of anyone willing to learn and work hard. Phillips' wife Kim, a registered nurse and epidemiologist, is not allowed to administer anesthesia at the Wyo clinic. But she is a key worker on the "numbing assembly line" beyond the border. Local newspaper editor Andy Matthews, who traveled with the team to Paraguay last summer, was put to work sterilizing instruments and even pulled a tooth before the week was over.

Matthews said he went on the trip purely as a volunteer and didn't take a single note during the week. But upon his return, he was inspired to write a series of articles for the Yadkin Ripple describing his experience. "It was almost a life transformation for me," said Matthews, who made his first journey with trepidation but now can't wait to go back. He said community response to the articles has been affirming and overwhelming. No matter where they operate, these clinics reveal the common threads in impoverished communities everywhere, he said.

An overwhelming similarity is the gratitude expressed by the patients. Kim Phillips recalls with particular affection the shy teenage girl from Paraguay who had been filling the holes in her front teeth with white nail polish. In exchange for their work, the volunteers got to see a smile they'd not soon forget.

The Brighten and Build Program

The popular consumer trend of tooth-whitening can help The Giving Hand Foundation. Through the "Brighten and Build Program," clients of Keith Phillips' private practice can make a $200 donation to the foundation and receive a home-whitening kit. The proceeds go to an endowment fund that supports scholarships for students pursuing dental careers and provides travel assistance to mission volunteers. The foundation hopes other dentists will offer the program in their practices. For more information, call (336) 463-2073. The address is The Giving Hand Foundation, 4314 Wyo Road, Yadkinville, NC 27055. Or visit www.givinghand.info



Dr. Keith Phillips at work in the dental clinic he opened in the rural community of Wyo, west of Winston-Salem.

Freelance writer Carla Burgess wrote about the Shallowford Farms popcorn farm in the November 2003 issue of Carolina Country.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield foundation grant will expand North Carolina's network of free medical clinics

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation (BCBSNC Foundation) will give $10 million over the next five years to help free health clinics across North Carolina.

Free health clinics are private, nonprofit, community-based organizations that provide medical care at little or no charge to low-income, uninsured and underinsured North Carolinians through the use of volunteer health care professionals and partnerships with other health providers. North Carolina has more free medical clinics (57) than any state in the country.

The grant will go to the North Carolina Association of Free Clinics (NCAFC) as part of a partnership between the organizations to strengthen the free health clinic network across the state.

The grant will help expand the number of free clinics and pharmacies across the state to 85. The grant is also expected to allow free clinics to more than double the number of people they serve. The Free Clinics association projects that by 2009, more than 300,000 uninsured patients annually will receive $150 million worth of health services from free clinics and pharmacies, including 750,000 prescriptions. In 2002, North Carolina's free clinics and pharmacies provided $60 million of health care to more than 125,000 uninsured patients, dispensing more than 350,000 prescriptions to both uninsured and underinsured patients.

"Many clinics across our state are facing huge fund-raising challenges due to the sluggish economy and layoffs," said John Mills, executive director of the NCAFC. "This initiative by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation will provide the additional support needed to meet ongoing challenges free health clinics face on a daily basis."

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation provides financial support to improve the health and well-being of North Carolinians. This mission is achieved through programs and services funded in response to grant requests, as well as through funding for programs supporting needs identified by the Foundation. The Foundation's primary focus areas include access to care for the uninsured and underinsured, eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities, physical activity, and screenings and education, all with a focus on preventive care.

The North Carolina Association of Free Clinics, founded in 1998, is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that conducts advocacy, research, public relations, resource development, training and technical assistance on behalf of its member free clinics and the people they serve. Headquartered in Winston-Salem, NCAFC offers an accreditation process for free clinics and mentoring for new clinic executives.

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina

Members of the North Carolina Association of Free Clinics
(listed alphabetically by location)

Helping Hands Clinic
Ahoskie
(252) 358-7833

Community Care Clinic
Albemarle
(704) 982-6640

ABCCM Medical Ministry
Asheville
(828) 259-5339

HOPE Clinic
Bayboro
(252) 745-5760

The Hunger Coalition, Inc.
Country Roads Mobile Pharmacy
Boone
(828) 262-1628

Transylvania County Volunteers in Medicine
Brevard
(828) 883-4454
www.tcvim.org

Open Door Clinic of Alamance County
Burlington
(336) 570-9800/1300

Good Samaritan Clinic of Haywood County
Canton
(828) 648-8676

Student Health Action Coalition
Chapel Hill
(919) 843-6841

Charlotte Community Health Center
Charlotte
(704) 316-7661

Community Health Services
Charlotte
(704) 375-0172
www.chs-nc.org

MedAssist of Mecklenburg
Charlotte
www.medassist.org
(704) 536-9766, Ext. 111

Nursing Center for Health Promotion UNC - Charlotte
Charlotte
(704) 687-4683

The Community Free Clinic
Concord
(704) 782-0932

Free Clinic of Our Towns
Davidson
(704) 896-0471/107

Senior PHARMAssist
Durham
(919) 688-4772
www.seniorpharmassist.org

Hope Clinic of Elizabeth City
Elizabeth City
(252) 338-6773

The CARE Clinic, Inc.
Fayetteville
(910) 485-0555
www.TheCareClinic.org

WATCH Mobile Unit
Goldsboro
(919) 735-1251

Medication Assistance Program Guilford County Health Department
Greensboro
(336) 641-8030

Greenville Community Shelter Clinic
Greenville
(252) 758-9244

HealthAssist
Greenville
(252) 847-7016

Pitt County Care Clinic
Greenville
(252) 355-5838

Volunteer Medical Resource Center
Hendersonville
(828) 697-8422

Cooperative Christian Ministries Health Care Center
Hickory
(828) 345-0854

The Community Clinic of High Point, Inc
High Point
(336) 841-7154

Lake Norman Free Clinic
Huntersville
(704) 947-1350

Caring Community Clinic
Jacksonville
(910) 938-1688

Helping Hands Clinic of Caldwell County
Lenoir
(828) 754-8565

Davidson Medical Ministries Clinic, Inc.
Lexington
(336) 249-6215

Helping Hands Health Clinic
Lincolnton
(704) 735-7145

Storehouse for Jesus Free Medical Clinic
Mocksville
(336) 751-1060

HealthQuest of Union County
Monroe
(704) 226-2050

Mooresville South Iredell Health Assistance Clinic
Mooresville
(704) 662-6904

Broad Street Clinic
Morehead City
(252) 726-4562

Good Samaritan Clinic
Morganton
(828) 439-9948

Surry Medical Ministries Clinic
Mount Airy
(336) 789-5058

MERCI Clinic
New Bern
(252) 633-1599

Senior Pharmacy Program
New Bern
(252) 638-3657

Community Mental Health Clinic
Raleigh
(919) 608-4716

The Open Door Clinic Urban Ministries of Wake County
Raleigh
(919) 832-0820

Raleigh Rescue Mission Medical Clinic
Raleigh
(919) (828) 9014, Ext. 112

Free Clinic of Reidsville & Vicinity, Inc
Reidsville
(336) 349-3220
www.ncpreventionpartners.org/nccpc47/index.htm

Rockingham Prescription Assistance Program
Reidsville
(336) 349-2343

Roanoke Valley Medical Ministries Clinic
Roanoke Rapids
(252) 308-1261

Community Care Clinic of Rowan County
Salisbury
(704) 636-4523

Good Shepard's Clinic
Salisbury
(704) 636-7200

Helping Hand Clinic
Sanford
(919) 777-0196

Moore Free Care Clinic
Southern Pines
(910) 692-3518

New Hope Clinic
Southport
(910) 278-6705

Senior Care Pharmacy
Spindale
(828) 286-4222

Open Door Clinic
Statesville
(704) 838-1108

Good Samaritan Clinic of Jackson County
Sylva
(828) 586-3146

The Good Samaritan Clinic of Haywood County
Waynesville/Canton
(828) 648-8676

Haywood Christian Ministry
Waynesville
(828) 456-4838

Tileston Outreach Health Center
Wilmington
(910) 343-8736

Crisis Control Ministry Pharmacy
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(336) 724-7875, Ext. 1044

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Winston-Salem
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You know you're from North Carolina if . . .

Maybe y'all had too much time on your hands during the snow and ice storms in February, because you certainly did send in some sure-fire signs that say "you know you're from North Carolina."

Our first list ran in the February 2004 magazine. Susan Bartlett of Morganton called to say it was "the most phenomenal page I have ever read." She was fixinto share it with her 22-year-old daughter and 19-year-old son. And because she's from the Conetoe area, they all know how to pronounce the name of that Edgecombe County town.

If you can think of any more, send them to us:

E-mail: Carolina.country@ncemcs.com
Mail: P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611.
Phone: (919) 875-3062.

From Dick Holmes:
- You know where Barney Fife stays when he goes to Raleigh. (The YMCA.)
- You say, "it don't" instead of "it doesn't."
- At least one of your female relatives has dipped snuff.
- You eat collards and black-eyed peas on New Year's Day.
- You sometimes eat country ham, grits and eggs for supper.

From Elizabeth & Joe Burkel:
- Your family car has a crew cab.
- Your luxury car is a 4 X 4.
- You measure your heating bill by the cord.
- You know what a logger load is.
- Your part-time job is selling firewood.

From Dan Rhyne:
- You have to travel to a neighboring state to buy lottery tickets.

From Tom Townsend:
- You know that Vicks VapoRub was invented in Selma in 1905 by Lunsford Richardson.

From the J.E. Moore family:
- Ya cain't hold a revival during cannin' season.
- Drinkin' from a jar ain't just for high-dollar restrints.
- Every real man owns a truck, or at least dreams of it.
- You set through a green light, and the car behind you pulls up beside you and asks if you need a push.

From Bud Royster:
- You have found yourself at a graveyard at sunrise on Easter morning.
- Your girlfriend's parents insist that you go to the Love Feast.
- You have a bird dog for grouse and another bird dog for quail.
- You know what a turkey shoot is.
- You can tease your wife about her father being a deputy sheriff in Mount Airy, in the 1960s. (It's true for me, anyway.)

From Ben Strickland:
- Your pastor calls off Sunday night services for Panthers' Super Bowl football game.
- Your renters pay you in quarters.

From Faye Allen:
- Racoons will test your crop of melons and let you know when they are ripe.
- "Onced" and "twiced" are words.
- You actually grow and eat okra.
- "Fixinto" is one word.
- "Backwards and forwards" mean "I know everything about you."
- "Jeet?" is actually a phrase meaning "Did you eat?"
- You've had to switch from "heat" to "A/C" in the same day.
- You own only five spices: salt, pepper, Texas Pete, mayonnaise and catsup.
- A carbonated soft drink isn't a soda, cola or pop. It's a coke, regardless of brand or flavor. Example: "What kinda coke you want?"

From Doris Blackwell:
- Barbecue is a noun, not a verb.
- It was not the Civil War, but The War of Northern Aggression.
- Pop is a sound, not a drink; and soda is for baking.

From David Taylor:
- Your basic greetings are followed by, "So how's your collards lookin' this year?"
- Your past tense of the verb "to see" is "seen," as in "I seen you at the auction yesterday."

From Lorrie Stanger:
- Your car has a "boot" instead of a trunk.

From Patsy Davis:
- You know that "barbeque" means cooking pork on an open pit and "cook out" means hamburgers and hotdogs.

From Jacob Bradshaw:
- You have a general idea where "over yonder" is.
- You know what a pig pickin' is.
- You believe that Sun Drop is the greatest soft drink in existence.

Some from eastern North Carolina:
- You say "tater" instead of "potato."
- You say "skeeter" instead of "mosquito."
- You say "hise" instead of "house."
- Your tractor is under the carport instead of your car.
- You brag on your new John Deere.
- All your clothes are Dixie Outfitters.
- You know ECU can beat State or Carolina in football anytime, anywhere.
- You know what "mellow your head" means.
- You know what "momic it up" means.
- You know how much a "mess of fish" is.

Anonymous:
- You remember when Easter Monday was a holiday.
- Your school was delayed because tobacco was late.
- A 7-course meal to you means a pack of Nabs and a Pepsi.

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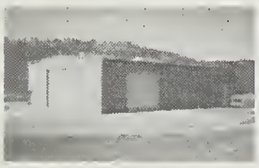

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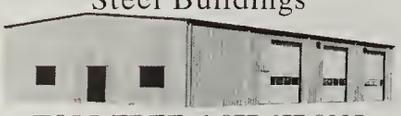
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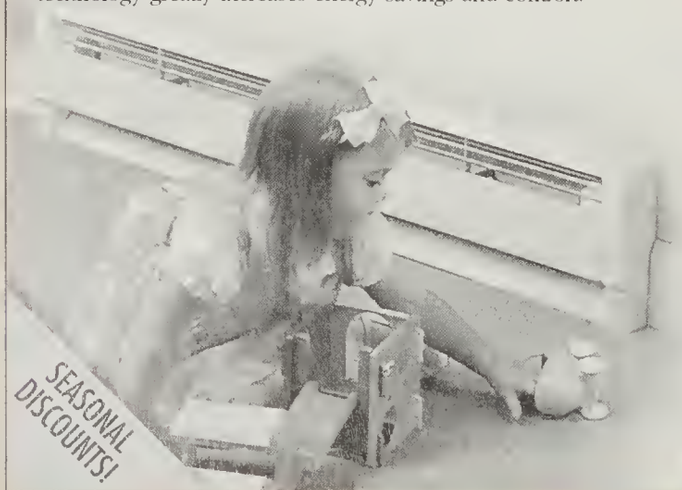

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e r a l c

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b m e d m c

FAILURE ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
e r a l c
,

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___.
b m e d m s c

Use the capital letters below to fill in the blanks above. "T S O M N I E C A" means s c r a m b l e d .

answers on page 37

Say WATT?

W	F	F	N	T
T	I	E	O	T
H	O	W	I	C
U	T	A	H	H

To put the best face on it, the father of the bride left standing at the altar said the wedding

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
___ ___ ___ ___ ___.

Use each letter once to spell out the five missing words. Starting with a W, move from letter to adjacent letter in any direction, up, down, left, right, or diagonally.

DIGIT DETECTION

WA²=RREN (The square of the two digit number WA is the four digit number RREN)
A-W=R R+R=E N+N=A

Given the simultaneous equations above, can you find the value of WARREN County?

Each letter stands for a digit. Use the grid to eliminate impossibilities, i.e. "No square ends in 2, 3, 7, or 8. Therefore N is not 2, 3, 7, or 8. No number less than 32 has a four-digit square. Therefore W is greater than 2."

	W	A	R	R	E	N
9						
8						X
7						X
6						
5						
4						
3						X
2	X					X
1	X					
0	X					

haiku*

*an unrhymed verse form of Japanese origin having three lines containing usu. 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively ...Webster's Ninth

Condensing a thought
to seventeen syllables
takes a lot of thought.
— Chajo

MATH WORDS

I T S = N U M B E R / F U N
6 1 3 = 4 8 0 5 9 2 / 7 8 4

Each letter in this division puzzle stands for a digit. Can you replace the digits that take a PAGE from this BOOK?

P A G E

P|B O O K
B
—
O
P
—
K O
K E
—
A K
A K
—

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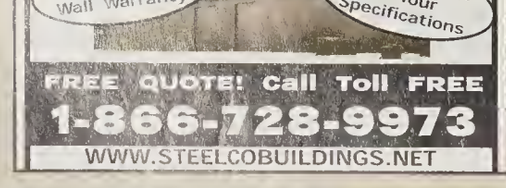

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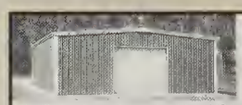

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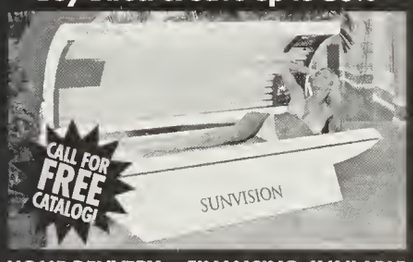

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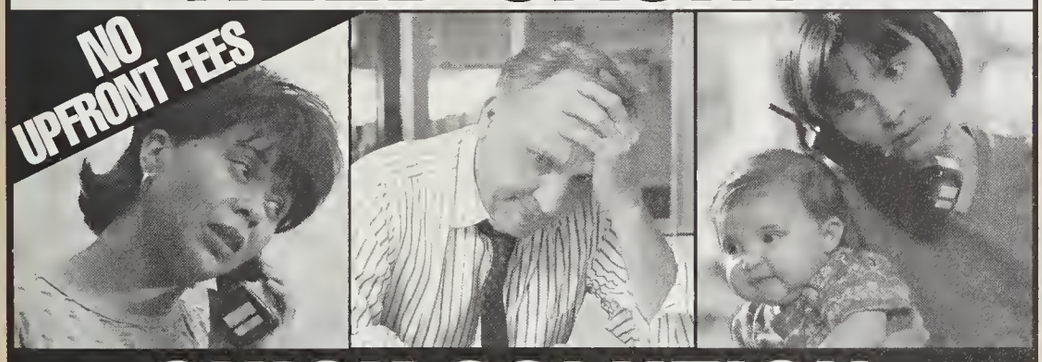
MATH WORDS
BOOK/P = PAGE
9552/3 = 3184

POLES APART
SUCCESS COMES IN CANS.
FAILURES COMES IN CAN'TS

SAY WATT?
WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH

DIGIT DETECTION
WARREN = 583364

NEED CASH?



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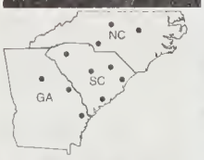

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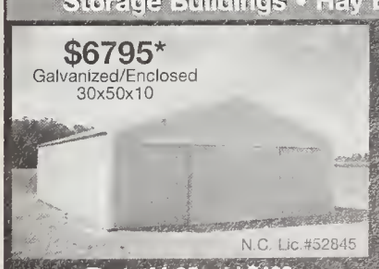

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(828) 456-6322

Maple Festival
March 28, Whitetop, Va.
(276) 388-3480

PIEDMONT

(EAST OF I-77 & WEST OF I-95)

Dancer-Illusionists
March 2, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945

Percussionist Richard Grimes
March 2, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7042
www.methodist.edu

Decorative Arts Lecture
March 3, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7331

Home and Garden Show
March 3-7, Charlotte
(800) 849-0248
www.SouthernSpringHomeandGardenShow.com

Home & Flower Show
March 3-5, Raleigh
(919) 831-6011
www.raleighconvention.com

Fayetteville Symphony
March 7, Fayetteville
(910) 433-4690

Richard Luby Chamber Music
March 7, Southern Pines
(910) 692-6261
www.weymouthcenter.org

Women Civil War Soldiers
March 10, Raleigh
(919) 715-0200
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

"The Foreigner" Play
March 12-14, Southern Pines
(910) 690-9069

Averasboro Battle Re-enactment
March 13-14, Godwin
(910) 892-5507

Andrew Jackson Celebration
March 13, Waxhaw
(704) 843-1832
www.perigee.net/~mwaxhaw

Contra Dance
March 13, Beaufort
(252) 504-2787
www.downeastfolkarts.org

History Bowl
March 15, Salisbury
(704) 636-2889
www.nctrans.org

Biltmore House Ceramics
March 16, Charlotte
(704) 895-9342

Organ Music Celebration
March 19, Old Salem
(336) 721-7348
www.oldsalem.org

"To Kill A Mocking Bird"
March 19-April 4, Fayetteville
(910) 323-4234
www.cfrt.org

MARCH EVENTS

Tanglewood Herb Fest
March 19-21, Clemmons
(336) 778-6303
www.forsythcountymgv.com/arboretum.html

Renewed: Women's Conference
March 26-27, Lexington
(336) 357-2875
www.renewedforwomen.com

Silent Auction
March 27, Denton
(336) 859-5922

Children's Festival
March 27, Statesville
(704) 838-1410

Kovack Pottery Fest
March 27-29, Seagrove
(336) 873-8727
www.geocities.com/kovackpottery/PastSpringFestivals.html

Renaissance Faire
March 27-28, Raleigh
(866) 468-7630
www.ncrenfaire.com

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Through March 4, Shelby
(704) 484-2787
www.ccartscouncil.org

American Music In History
Through March 19, Asheville
Asheville Art Museum
(828) 253-3227
www.ashevilleart.org

Youth Art
Through April 17, West Jefferson
(336) 246-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Dinosaur Eggs
Through May 16, Gastonia
Schiele Museum
(704) 866-6909
www.schielemuseum.org

PIEDMONT

"Defying Gravity"
Through March 7, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Art
(919) 839-6262
www.ncartmuseum.org

N.C. Artists Competitions
March 13-May 9, Fayetteville
Fayetteville Museum of Art
(910) 485-5121

Toy Town Exhibit
Through March 28, High Point
High Point Museum
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

African-American Inventor
Through March 31, Winston-Salem
SciWorks
(336) 767-6730
www.sciworks.org

Colored Pencil Art
Through March 31, Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill Museum
(919) 967-1400
www.chapelhillmuseum.org

"Soaring Symbols: Eagles"
Through April 4, Charlotte
Charlotte Museum of History
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

Titanic Artifacts
Through April 18, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences
(919) 733-7450
www.naturalsciences.org

Bourke-White Photography
Through May 2, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

"Brain Teasers 2"
Through May 8, Oxford
Granville County Historical Society Museum
(919) 693-9706

U.S. In Iraq, Afghanistan
Through May 16, Fayetteville
Airborne & Special Operations Museum
(910) 483-3003
www.asomf.org

Mexican Tomb Figures
Through May 22, Winston-Salem
Museum of Anthropology
(336) 758-5282

"26 Contraptions, A-Z"
Through May 31, Durham
Museum of Life and Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

World War II Posters
Through Sept 1, Charlotte
Museum of History
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

COAST

Quilt Show
March 1-31, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Youth In Arts Exhibit
March 14-April 1, Edenton
(252) 482-8005

Scrimshaw Exhibit
Through April 18, Beaufort
N.C. Maritime Museum
(252) 728-7317
www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/maritime

"Politics In Action"
Through Nov 28, Wilmington
Cape Fear Museum
(910) 341-4350
www.capefearmuseum.com

Inventive mechanical contraptions, one for each letter of the alphabet, are on display at the Museum of Life and Science in Durham. "Contraptions A to Z," an interactive exhibit, will be presented through May 31. Call (919) 220-5429 or visit www.ncmls.org

"The Amen Corner"
March 31-April 2, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1443
www.uncfsu.edu

COAST
(EAST OF I-95)

Tennessee Walker Exhibition
March 2, Merritt
(252) 635-1001

"Far and Away" Movie
March 2, New Bern
(252) 514-4900
www.tryonpalace.org

Black Film Festival
March 4-7, Wilmington
(910) 350-2681

Musical Review About Love
March 4-6, Elizabeth City
(252) 338-3382

Blues Festival
March 5-6, Lumberton
(910) 735-1267
www.robesonroadrunners.com

continued on p. 40

MARCH EVENTS

continued from p. 39

Children's Festival
March 6, Clinton
(910) 564-4100
www.capefearevents.com

Ten Tenors
March 7, Wilmington
(800) 523-2820
www.thalianhall.com

Easter Egg Hunt
March 10, Beaufort
(252) 728-5225
www.historicbeaufort.com

Quilt Lecture
March 11, Manteo
(252) 475-1506
www.roanokeisland.com

St. Patrick's Day Festival
March 13, Emerald Isle
(252) 354-6350

Dinner & Stage Show
March 13 & 27, Rose Hill
(800) 774-9634

St. Patrick's Day Festival
March 13, Farmville
(252) 753-4670

Outer Banks Opry
March 13, Manteo
(252) 475-1506
www.roanokeisland.com

Native American Archaeology
March 13, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/bath/bath.htm

Organic Gardening
March 18, New Bern
(252) 514-4900
www.tryonpalace.org

Arabian Horse Show
March 19-21, Williamston
(252) 792-5111

Fire Ant Festival
March 20, Whiteville
(910) 642-3171
www.discovercolumbus.org

Bluegrass Festival
March 20, Ocean Isle Beach
(910) 287-2800
www.silvercoastwinery.com

Traditional & Swing Music
March 20, Beaufort
(252) 504-2787
www.downeastfolkarts.org

Home & Garden Show
March 20-21, New Bern
(252) 638-8101

Herb & Garden Fair
March 20, Scotts Hill
(910) 686-9518
www.poplargrove.com

Fremont Daffodil Festival
March 27, Fremont
(919) 242-5724

Planters Day
March 27-28, White Oak
(910) 866-5916
www.geocities.com/woruritan

"Bye Bye Birdie" Musical
March 31, Elizabeth City
(800) 335-9050

LISTING INFORMATION

Deadline for May: March 25 | Deadline for June: April 25.

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www.carolinacountry.com

Or Submit Listings by Mail, Fax or E-Mail
Please include title, date(s), location, phone number and/or Web site url. Photos (300 dpi or hard copies) are welcome. Send to:
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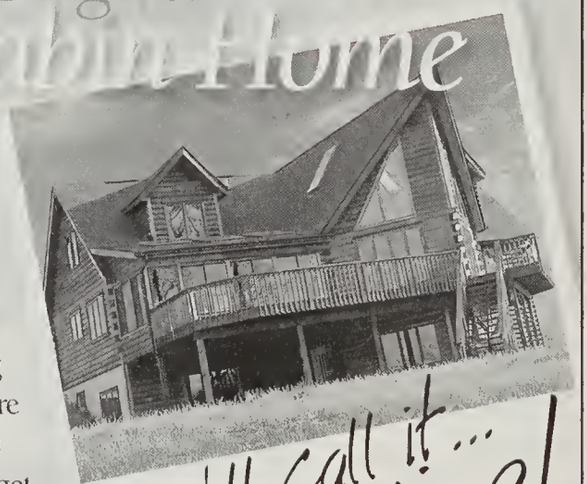

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Off to the Races

The Stoneybrook Steeplechase is a Sandhills tradition

By Tara Verna

Combine the speed of flat racing, the challenge of beating the clock, and the stamina of jumping six-foot-high hurdles over a two-to-four-mile race, and you'd get one of the most impressive equestrian events in the Sandhills of North Carolina: The Stoneybrook Steeplechase.

The 53rd annual steeplechase, set for April 3 at 9 a.m., heralds the arrival of spring at the 250-acre Carolina Horse Park near Southern Pines. Attracting approximately 20,000 spectators each year, the event continues to grow in popularity with its festive tailgating, elaborate hat contests and attractive winnings—more than $70,000 this year.

But it wasn't all that long ago that the future of the steeplechase seemed uncertain, after the death of the man who first gave it life and the sale of his home where the race had been held for 49 years straight.

History of Stoneybrook

Michael G. Walsh left his native Ireland for the U.S. in 1925. After establishing himself as a talented rider in New York, he purchased a stable of his own—Stoneybrook—near Southern Pines in the 1940s. In time, it became a race track. Mickey, his wife Kitty and their eight children kept the steeplechase alive for nearly half a century, until his death in 1993 and the subsequent sale of the land in 1996.

Winner of the Lumbee River EMC-sponsored race, jockey Richard G. Stokes riding "Our Thunderbolt" clears a fence at the 2003 Stoneybrook Steeplechase held near Southern Pines.

In 2001, a group of area horse enthusiasts purchased 250 acres of farm land in Hoke County for $4,000 an acre and turned it into an equestrian eventing park, less than a dozen miles from the original site. The group, now known as the Carolina Horse Park Foundation, protects the land, preserving the open space while promoting national and international equestrian competition. In addition to the steeplechase, the park hosts combined driving, dressage, horse trials and hunter/jumper shows.

Mickey's legacy continues to thrive, thanks to the efforts of his youngest daughter, Phoebe Walsh Robertson, who serves as race director of the Stoneybrook Steeplechase and as a member of the horse park's board of directors.

How the Steeplechase Got Its Name

In 1752, two Irishmen raced their horses 4.5 miles across their homeland, from St. John's Church to St. Mary's Church. As prominent features of the landscape, church steeples easily marked the start and finish of a race. This cross-country chase between steeples became known as a "steeplechase" and a new sport was born.

Steeplechasing found its way to the U.S. in the 1830s, with some of the oldest and most prestigious races starting toward the end of the century.

The Steeplechase Today

Today, steeplechasing occurs in 12 states, from Florida to New York. The sport offers more than $5 million in total purses, generates excitement for millions of spectators, raises millions for charity, and includes some of the world's best horses, jockeys and trainers.

This year the Stoneybrook Steeplechase, one of 47 such events across the nation, will run six races, in addition to a pony race for children. The races offer purses or winnings ranging from $1,000 to $22,500. One race, The Mickey and Kitty Walsh Memorial, offers a $10,000 purse and is sponsored by one of North Carolina's Touchstone Energy® cooperatives, Lumbee River EMC.

Lumbee River EMC sponsors not only the steeplechase, but also recently partnered with the Carolina Horse Park itself. The cooperative supplies the park with electricity and decided to further strengthen that tie after recognizing the positive economic and job-related impact of the park on communities in Hoke County. "We are, of course, very lucky and grateful to have Lumbee River EMC as a sponsor, otherwise we would be hard pressed to host the 53rd Stoneybrook Steeplechase," says Kate McCall, event manager for the Carolina Horse Park.

Ways to Help

Although much has been raised or donated, the horse park still needs nearly $2 million to fulfill its vision.

- **Become a Friend of the Park:** Starts at $30. Some levels of membership include passes to all events. Sign up at *www.carolinahorsepark.com*

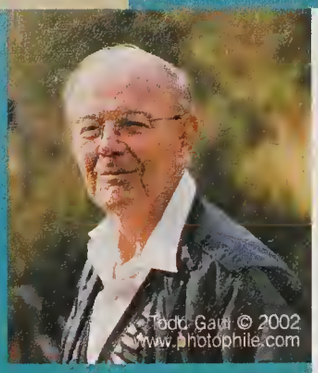
- **Offer to Volunteer:** Each event at the park requires lots of volunteers to pull it off. Choose from fence judges, scorers, stabling stewards, among others. Call (910) 246-9808.

If You Plan To Go

General admission tickets start at $15. You can download, print and mail in an order form or purchase tickets online at www.carolinahorsepark.com. You can also check out a calendar of other upcoming events.

To get to Stoneybrook at Five Points you take Highway 211 out of Southern Pines, to Montrose Road and follow the signs.

by Hank Smith



Late winter and early spring foretell longer days of outdoor gardening duties. New and seasoned gardeners keep keen eyes on the proper placement of plants and evaluate how effective they are in the landscape.

A well-tended lawn beautifies your place.

Starting a new lawn

No matter what variety of grass you choose, successful growth depends largely on soil preparation before planting. All trash must be removed. This is especially true for newly built homes because builders often leave pieces of excess building materials in the yard.

Level and grade the area to be planted. Fill in low places and slope lawn away from the house. This helps prevent future moisture problems in the house's foundation that can occur after heavy rains. After leveling, add and mix soil conditioners and fertilizers. Conditioners improve soil by increasing moisture and fertilizer holding capacity. They also absorb air and water. Organic materials that can be used as soil conditioners include old sawdust, cotton gin waste, peanut hulls and sewer sludge. Inorganic conditioners include vermiculite, perlite, colloidal phosphates, and pulverized marl. Do not use marl on centipede, carpet and Bahia grasses.

Fertilizer and lime should be added on the basis of a soil test. Your local county extension office is most helpful in advising about the soil test and grass varieties.

Evening glow with moon vine

Creamy-white flowers swirl open as the sun sets, just as morning glory blooms awaken with the new day's sunshine. Moon vine (Calonyction aculeatum) is a close cousin of the morning glory. The name fits the plant perfectly, for moon vine looks as if someone hung the moon (or several moons) on the big, leafy vine. Flowers perfume the air at night and smell delightful, making it a good choice for outdoor living areas used at night in the summer. Also called moon flower, the plants are available at many garden shops.

Seeds are planted outdoors from the last hard freeze to mid-July. Plants from garden centers begin flowering in late May. The plants prefer full sun and rich soil. If grown from seed, use a file to nick the hard kernels. Then soak seed overnight before planting about one-half inch deep. After germination, feed occasionally with a water-soluble fertilizer. Vines usually clamber up a trellis or arbor without help, but need twine or other support on lampposts or columns. Each bloom lasts for just one night, but at least one take its place the following evening. Seedpods can be collected from spent flowers for planting next season, or you can let pods fall to the ground. Their seed will germinate next year.

Shade in a hurry

With proper preparation and handling, large trees can be planted to supply needed shade. Good results can be expected from a young tree one to five inches in diameter (measured at chest height.) This size tree will be from ten to thirty feet tall and will add beauty and shade within a couple of years. The first root ball on such a tree will weigh several hundred pounds. It's best to have a reliable nurseryman to plant it.

Trees like to be transplanted before the end of March. In mid-and-upper South, April is satisfactory. Trees require good soil drainage. Poor results usually follow if water stands for a long period after a heavy rain.

Make the planting hole at least two feet deeper and wider than the ball of the tree. It's helpful to add peat moss mixed with soil at planting time. For a one-to-five-inch tree, add a cup of 20 percent phosphate to each bushel of soil in the hole. Phosphate doesn't move down into the hole very fast, but it does stimulate root growth.

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

For more March gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com

GARDENING FOCUS

Lawn weed control

It's a must to apply chemicals at the recommended rate in a weed control program. The margin of chance between effectiveness in killing weeds and injury to lawn grasses is not usually great. For example, if you apply half the recommended rate of most herbicides, poor weed control will result. If, on the other hand, you apply two to three times as much as recommended, there will be heavy damage to turf grasses.

There are many ways to apply herbicides. With granular materials, you can use a fertilizer spreader. Spread half the weed killer in one direction and the other half in the other direction, in checkerboard style at right angles to the first application. There will not be as many skips or misses, and it will cover better.

Although most chemical labels contain spreader settings, it pays to carefully calibrate the chemical on a weight basis. Once the applicator has been set for the right amount of material to come out, it's advisable to write down details of the procedure for later use. Liquids are normally mixed with water and applied as a spray.

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Caulk your way to a tighter home

By James Dulley

A house seems to be a strong, rigid structure, but the forces from wind and temperature changes throughout the day and from season to season make it move quite a bit. The caulk around your windows and doors needs to be flexible so it remains attached to the housing materials, and continues to stop air leakage.

If the caulk feels dry and hard, it is probably time to replace it with new caulk. Even though you may not see noticeable cracks and gaps, the caulk is probably not adhering to the window frame or walls. If you dig in it with the tip of a screwdriver, sections of it may fall out.

One simple method to find areas that need to be caulked is to hold the back of your hand near windows and doors on windy days. You will be able to feel serious air leaks. Also, move a lighted stick of incense around all the windows and doors and watch the trail of smoke. Even a small air leak will make the thin smoke trail move.

Windows and doors are the most obvious locations for air leakage into a home, but they are not always the worst culprits. The sill area, where the walls rest on the foundation, is often the area of greatest air leakage. In particular, the top of a concrete foundation can be quite uneven, leaving many gaps between it and the lumber sill plate.

Check for gaps around the wiring where the main electrical service enters your home. Do the same where the telephone and cable lines come indoors. Holes for plumbing penetrations for outdoor faucets are often much bigger than the diameter of the water pipe.

Check around any penetrations in the ceilings for recessed lights, vent fans, ceiling paddle fans, etc. You will probably have to get up into your attic and move some of the insulation away to check these. While you are up there, also check for gaps where the plumbing vent pipes pass through the attic floor.

When you visit your home center store caulk aisle, you may be overwhelmed by the vast array of different caulking materials. There are many types of specialty caulking materials for specific applications, but you should be able to get by with several different types.

Also, check out the inexpensive caulking tools. Some of these simple tools, for removing the old caulk and for applying a smooth layer of new caulk, can make the job much easier. Since the old caulk is hard and brittle, it probably was not silicone so a caulk remover (softener) chemical should make it ea-sier to remove the caulk. These chemical removers are not as effective on silicone.

Kits allow you to mix paint with latex caulk.

Two main categories of caulking materials are "kitchen and bath" and others. Kitchen and bath caulk has special additives to fight mildew. These will be effective any place there is a high moisture level, not just on bathtubs and sinks.

For indoors, where temperatures remain constant, any latex caulk will be effective. It will have a life of about 20 years or more. It is also "paintable." Instead of painting the caulk, kits are available to mix the paint with the latex caulk to tint it for a perfect match. This is an advantage where you want matching caulk between two materials that are not going to be painted, for example, such as natural wood, tile or aluminum.

The most common type of caulk used by homeowners is acrylic latex with silicone added. It costs a dollar or two more per tube than plain acrylic latex, but it lasts about 10 years longer and is more durable. The addition of silicone makes the caulk more flexible and it adheres better to more materials. It is still paintable, and cleans up with soap and water.

Silicone caulk is best used where high flexibility is required, often outdoors. Most silicone is not paintable, so it is available in several colors. It is a bit more difficult to lay a smooth bead with silicone caulk, it has an odor as it cures, and cleanup is more difficult.

For large gaps, expandable urethane foam caulk is a good choice. It also adds some insulation value to the gap. It is available in low-and high-expansion formulas. The low-expansion type is best for most applications.

Write for (instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 937— buyer's guide and properties of 10 common types of caulk materials, list of 15 manufacturers of caulk and special tools, and tips on how and where to caulk properly. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE.

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recipes editor, **Jenny Lloyd**

Coconut Cream Pie

¾ cup sugar
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
⅛ teaspoon salt
3 cups milk
3 eggs, beaten
1½ cups flaked coconut, toasted, divided
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 pastry shell (9 inches), baked

In a saucepan, combine sugar, flour and salt. Stir in milk until smooth; cook and stir over medium high heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat; gradually stir about 1 cup of hot mixture into beaten eggs. Return all to saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Remove from the heat; stir in 1 cup coconut, butter and vanilla. Pour into pastry shell; sprinkle with remaining coconut. Chill for several hours before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

Yield: 6-8 servings.

Special Brussels Sprouts

¼ cup sliced almonds
1 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 package (16 ounces) frozen Brussels sprouts
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 can (10¾ ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
2 tablespoons milk
1 jar (2 ounces) chopped pimientos, drained
¼ teaspoon pepper
⅛ teaspoon dried thyme

In a small skillet, sauté almonds in butter until lightly browned; set aside. In a saucepan, cook Brussels sprouts according to package directions, adding the bouillon cube to the water. Meanwhile, in another saucepan, combine the soup, milk, pimientos, pepper and thyme. Cook until heated through. Drain sprouts; top with the cream sauce and stir gently. Sprinkle with almonds.

Yield: 4-6 servings.

Potluck Chicken Hot Dish

½ cup chopped fresh mushrooms
3 tablespoons finely chopped onion
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 tablespoons butter or margarine, divided
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1¼ cups milk
¾ cup mayonnaise*
4 cups cubed cooked chicken
3 cups cooked long grain rice
2 celery ribs, chopped
1 cup frozen peas, thawed
1 jar (2 ounces) diced pimientos, drained
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¾ cup coarsely crushed cornflakes

In a large saucepan, sauté mushrooms, onion and garlic in 3 tablespoons butter until tender. Stir in flour until blended. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from the heat; stir in mayonnaise. Add the chicken, rice, celery, peas, pimientos, lemon juice, salt and pepper; mix well.

Transfer to an ungreased 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking dish. Melt remaining butter; toss with cornflake crumbs. Sprinkle over top. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until bubbly.

Yield: 8-10 servings.

*Editor's Note: Reduced-fat or fat-free mayonnaise may not be substituted for regular mayonnaise.

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at *www.tasteofhome.com*.

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